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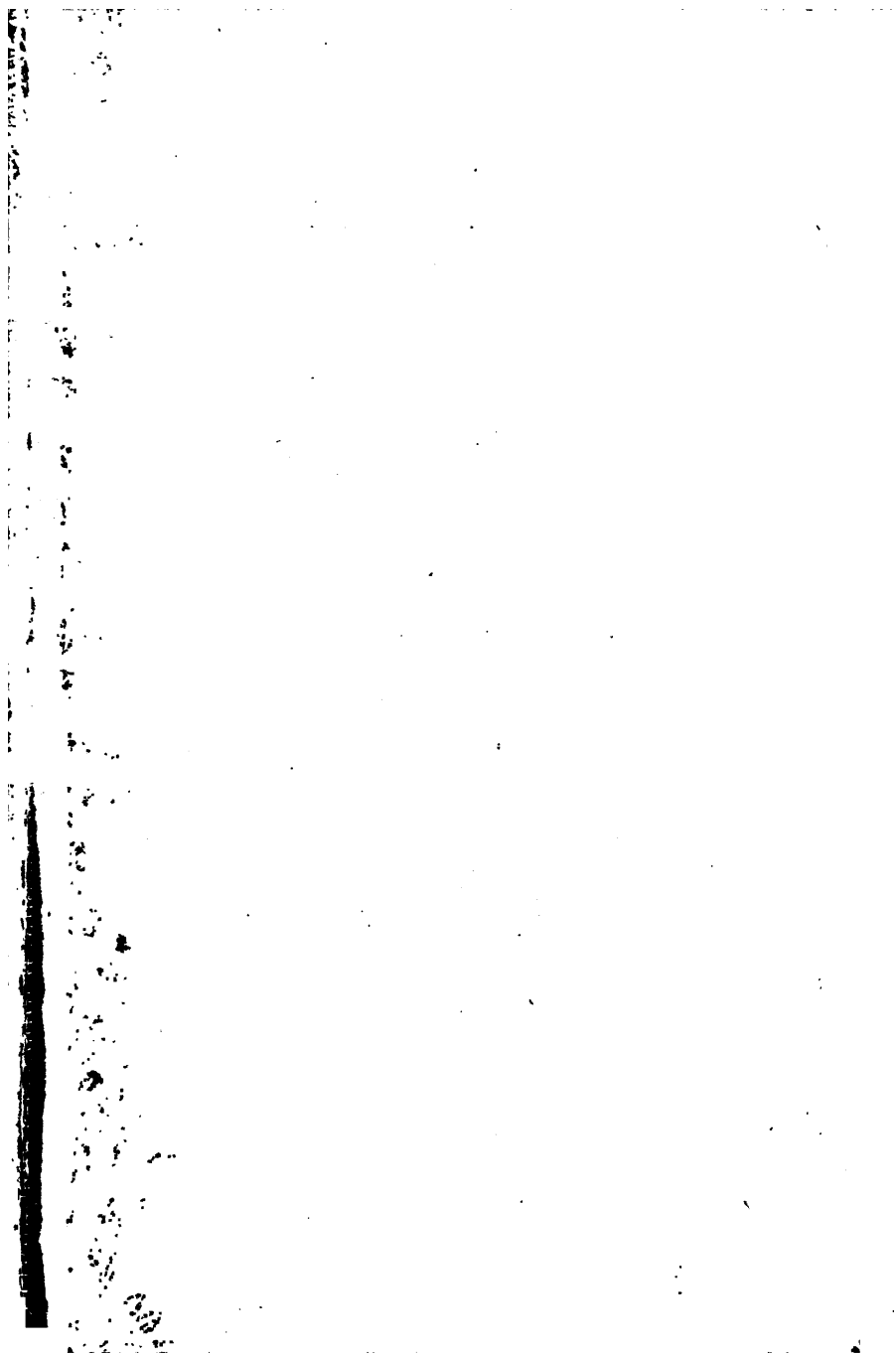
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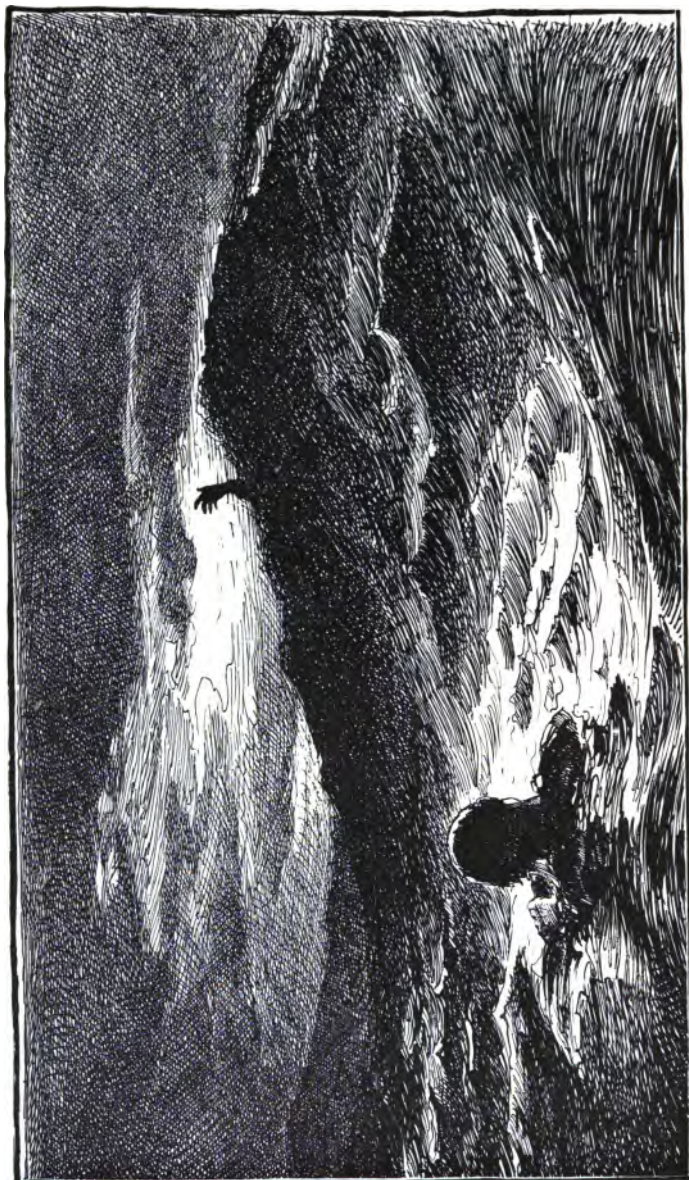
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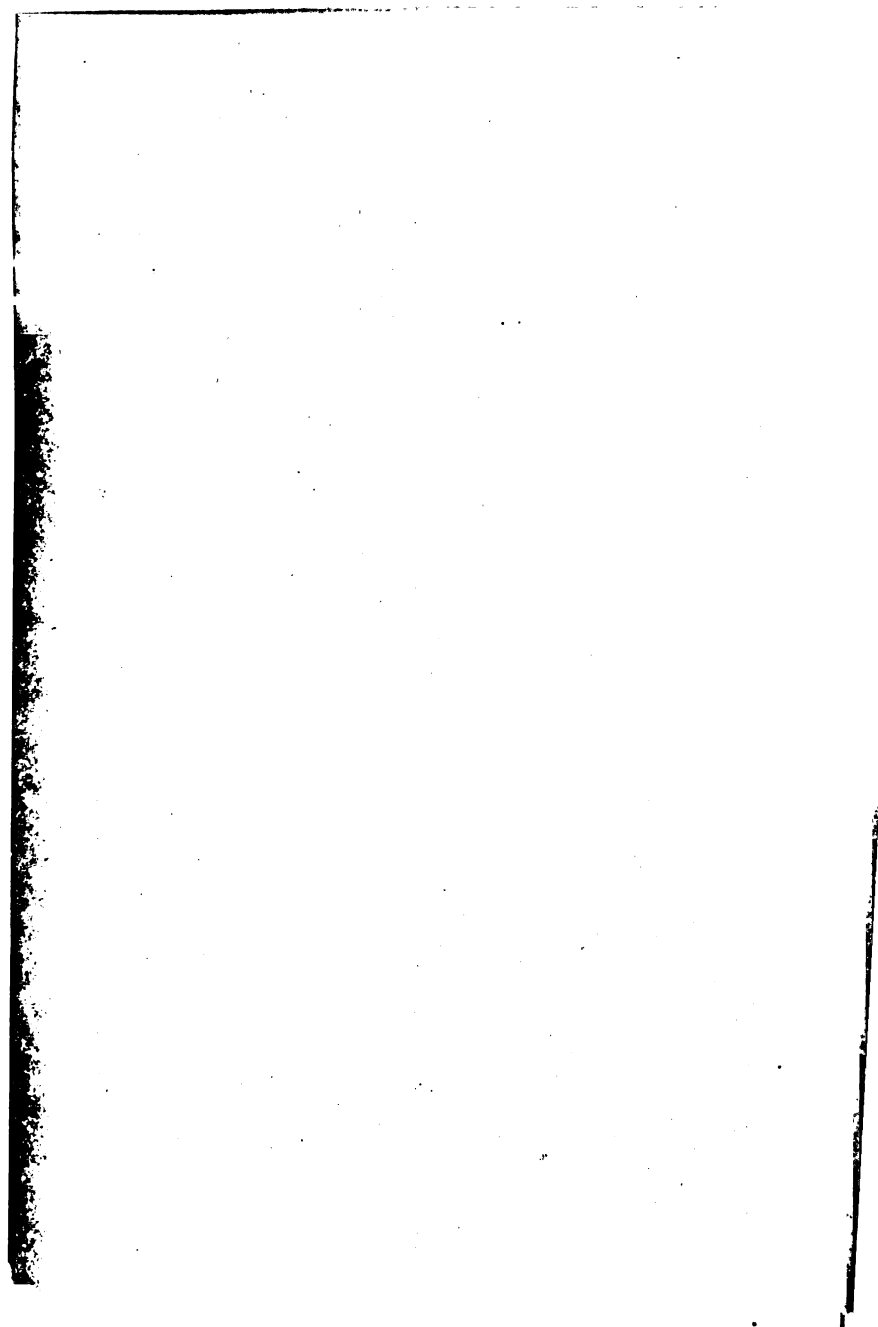


*'I saw on its black outline a hand clutching at the clouds.'*

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# IN PERIL AND PRIVATION

*STORIES OF MARINE DISASTER RETOLD*

BY

JAMES PAYN

AUTHOR OF

'BY PROXY' 'LOST SIR MASSINGBERD' &c.



*WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS*

London

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1885

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## PREFACE.

IT was remarked by Charles Dickens of 'Robinson Crusoe,' that it never drew down a tear, nor evoked a smile, from any reader ; in spite of which it remains the most popular book in the language. The reason of this is, that it treats of the shifts and expediciencies to which civilised man is reduced when cut off from the rest of his species, a subject that comes home to all of us, because, under not impossible circumstances, we may all find ourselves in the same position. 'What should I do,' is a question that almost every boy has asked himself, 'if I were cast upon an uninhabited and desert island ?' The islands on which the

castaway finds himself are not indeed always desert ; but on the other hand, if fertile, it is only too often that he has cause to regret it, since those its fruitfulness supports are more to be feared than solitude and privation.

Of all the races of men most hostile to those who should be their brethren, the Malay is perhaps the chief ; and by those who suffer shipwreck he is at present as much an object of fear as, in old times, was the Moor of Barbary. To those who are acquainted with this cruel and treacherous nation, to perish in the gaping wave, or to endure the uttermost torments of hunger and thirst, seem preferable to falling into his hands. Yet our countrymen have often done so, and some at least have survived to tell the tale. Indeed, as regards the world of ocean, what have English and Americans *not* survived ?

In reading the records of marine disaster, crowded with events more stirring and

startling than any other page of history, the question that appeals to us incessantly is : 'How could human beings endure this or that ? such perils ? such privations ? such tortures ? such starvation ? and especially, (as often happens) without a companion to sympathise with them, or any eye, save that of Omnipotence, to mark their sufferings and endurance.

The narratives of shipwrecks have to landmen a dreadful uniformity ; we are dazed, like the poor shipwrecked souls themselves, by the roar of the wind, and the rush of the wave ; beyond the fact that a leak is sprung, which makes it a mere question of how long it will be before the good ship goes down, 'with all her crew complete,' unless they escape from her in her mere cockle-shells of boats ; or that she has struck on breakers, and will presently be beaten to pieces, nothing is clear to us. We hear the orders of the captain, generally

delivered with the same calmness, albeit with trumpet voice, as though he were in harbour ; the shrill whistle of the boatswain ; the throb of the labouring pumps in the vain endeavour to decrease the water rising through the hull ; the crash of the masts as they are cut away to lighten the ship ; but nothing is presented to us save a vague picture of sudden and immense disaster. It needs a technical eye to discern the nature either of the danger or the attempts at remedy. The general confusion and panic of those on board seem to extend to the reader himself, who only feels that all is lost unless discipline is maintained, and (above all) the sentinel over the spirit store is faithful to his charge, which he guards with loaded pistols.

But when the passengers and crew take to the frail boats, or the open raft, the salient points of the catastrophe begin to present themselves ; the individual is separated from

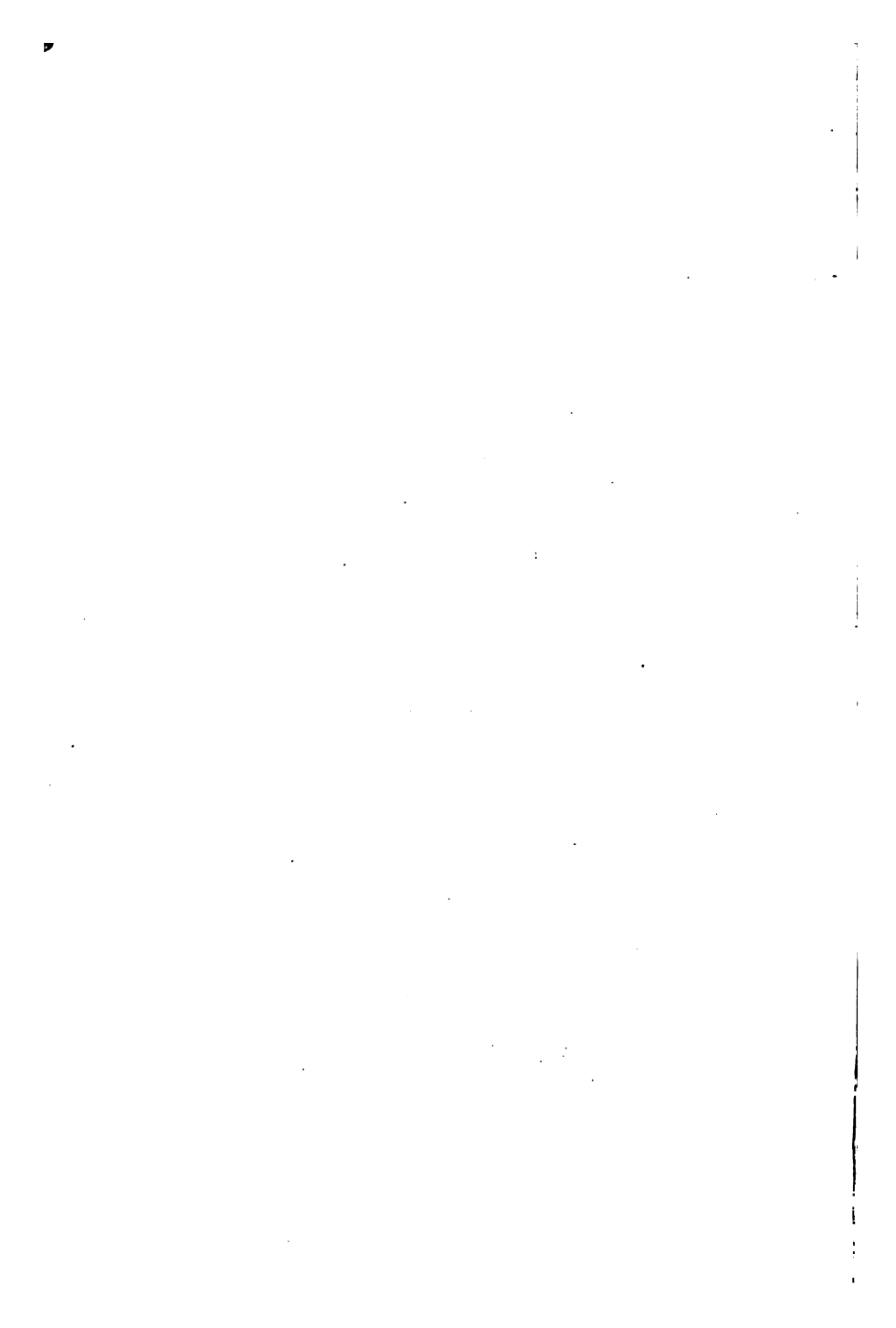
the crowd and attracts our pity or admiration ; the multitudinous mass of misery resolves itself into its separate items, men, women, children, each of whose misfortunes we follow with bated breath and tearful eye, as though they were our own. Nay, even in the open boat, with its rag of sail and miserable accommodation, its floods of water (alas ! not drinkable) that have to be bailed out by hand or with a pannikin, and its wretched fare, growing scantier every day, and measured with miser's hand to starving mouths ; even *then*, I say, the drama lacks completeness because the element on which it takes place is unfamiliar to us.

It is, for the most part, in fact only when the sufferers get to land—whether on the solitary rock, or on some sandy spit, haunted by wild beasts ; or on the territory of hostile savages—that we thoroughly sympathise with their sorrows, and understand their position.

The stories of these castaways are, from their very simplicity, full of pathos, but they are commonly narrated in the crude form of a diary, or set down afterwards from recollection, at the request of some consul or other authority for official purposes. It has struck me, therefore, that some of them may be retold with advantage.

Dickens, who in his youth was a greedy reader of this sort of literature, has told us how these adventures haunted him ; indeed they obviously suggested to him the 'Island of Silverstore' and the 'Wreck of the Golden Mary.' Admirable as are both those stories, they do not surpass in beauty and tenderness some of these actual records of human endurance. It may well be thought, for example, a mere effort of imagination—and a bold one—to depict a handful of people, worn and weary, and tramping over pathless solitudes, face to face with death, who have still the

courage and gentleness to cling to a helpless child, to carry him on their shoulders, to share for weeks with him their fragment of a meal, and to the very last to find a hope to cheer him long denied to themselves. Yet this incident actually happened, as will be presently narrated.





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## IN PERIL AND PRIVATION.

### *THE WRECK OF THE 'GROSVENOR.'*

ON the 4th of August, 'being Sunday, 1782,' the 'Grosvenor,' East Indiaman, homeward-bound, was scudding, under little canvas, before a north-west gale. She had left Madagascar to the north-east some days ago, and was supposed by her captain (Captain Coxen) to be at least a hundred leagues from the nearest land. Before daylight John Hynes, a seaman, with one Lewis and others, were aloft striking the foretop-gallant-mast, when Hynes asked Lewis if he did not think certain breakers ahead indicated land. The latter answering in the affirmative, they hastened to inform the third mate, Mr. Beal, who had the watch. Mr. Beal 'only laughed

at them,' but in a few minutes the 'Grosvenor's' keel struck, and 'as she beat very hard, every soul on board instantly ran on deck.'

These souls, predoomed to destruction, were very many—nearly two hundred, including, alas! both women and children and sick. If the position of those who are well and strong in such circumstances is pitiable, what must be that of the weak? The captain endeavoured in vain to mitigate the universal panic; for though no water could be detected in the vessel by the pumps, it was well understood there was a hole in her; and since the wind was off the land, which could now be discerned a hundred yards away, it was feared she would be driven to sea, and founder. The gunner was ordered to fire signals of distress; but on going to the powder-room he found it full of water. The mainmast was cut away, then the foremast, but without easing the doomed ship, against which the waves beat with impatient fury, as though greedy for their prey.

.

To those who have only seen the summer sea at play upon our shores it is difficult to picture the force with which in storm every wave strikes a vessel in this position. She shudders at every blow, and groans and shrieks like any living creature. To the ignorant and timid, who feel the hull quivering under them, it seems as if she were going to pieces at every stroke. 'At all hazards,' they say to themselves, 'let us get out of this to'land;' but when they look upon the boiling waves, that seethe, as in some bottomless caldron, between themselves and the wished-for shore, even the frail planks on which they stand seem, by comparison, security. Even when a boat has perhaps with infinite difficulty been lowered, and they see it thrown hither and thither like a ball beneath them, and only kept from instant destruction against the ship's side by boat-hooks, they shrink from such a means of escape, and leave it to bolder spirits. In the case of the 'Grosvenor,' the yawl and jolly-boat, which had been hoisted out, were dashed to pieces as soon as

they touched the water. An Italian and two seamen, however, swam to land with the deep sea line, by help of which a stronger rope was conveyed ashore, and then a hawser.

By this time a great crowd of natives had collected on the beach, who helped to fasten the hawser to the rocks, and the other end of the rope being made fast to the capstan on deck, it was hauled tight. Communication was thus established between the ship and the land; a perilous mode of safety, however, that could only be used by the most agile seamen, of whom no less than fifteen out of twenty attempting to pursue it dropped into the sea, and were drowned before the eyes of their companions.

The people on the wreck now busied themselves in constructing a raft, the only means of escape that was apparently left them, and it was launched overboard, and guided to the ship's stern, so that the women and children might be dropped into it from the quarter gallery. But hardly had it reached the waves when it was torn asunder—the



*THE WRECK OF THE 'GROSVENOR'* 5

great ropes that bound it together parting like pack-thread'—and the men in charge of it perished. Picture to yourself, reader, how



WRECK OF THE 'GROSVENOR.'

each of these successive events must have affected the survivors, who beheld them all, and felt them to be so many preludes to

their own destruction. In despair they all huddled together on the poop awaiting death, while with a crash that made itself heard above the tempest, the great ship clove asunder.

And here, as we shall find often happens in these narratives of disaster, what would seem to have been their certain doom proved for a time their preservation ; for the wind suddenly veered round, and blowing directly to the land, carried the starboard quarter on which they stood into shallow water, and the whole company reached the shore.

By this time the night was falling ; but the natives, who had retired with the setting sun, had left the embers of a fire, by which means three others were lighted, and some hogs and poultry being driven ashore, the poor creatures made a good repast—which was their last one. They soon learned from their companions on the land that it was from no motives of humanity that the inhabitants had offered them assistance—nor, indeed, beyond fastening the hawser, had they given

any help, but occupied themselves in seizing whatever came to land, especially anything in the shape of iron.

Among most savage nations iron holds the place which gold fills among those more civilised, and a few horseshoes or rusty nails are valued more highly by them than pearls or diamonds. To any one who has seen the weapons or instruments in use among the South Sea Islanders, and the curious devices by which horn and bone and wood are made to supply the place of the coveted metal, this will not appear strange ; and as the desire for gold too often hardens the heart among our own people, so that for iron makes that of the savage as the nether millstone, or as iron itself.

With the next morning a host of natives thronged the beach, to the great terror of the castaways, who had no weapons of any kind. The former took not the slightest notice of the new arrivals, but, knowing that they could turn their attention to them at any time, busied themselves exclusively with

plunder. Next to positive ill-treatment, the poor 'Grosvenor' people felt that nothing could augur worse for them than this total indifference to their wretched condition.

A cask of beef, a barrel of flour, and a puncheon of rum they managed to secure for themselves, and with a couple of sails they contrived two tents for the ladies and children. This was all the provision they had, though they were a hundred and thirty-five in number, and even the puncheon of rum the captain gave orders to be staved, 'lest the natives should become dangerous by getting intoxicated.'

Then he called the people together, and in a pathetic speech informed them that to the best of his belief they were on the coast of Caffraria, and that it might be possible in sixteen or seventeen days to reach on foot some of the Dutch settlements. As the ship was wrecked, he informed them that his authority was at an end, but if it was their wish he would resume it, as without discipline the difficulties of travel would be

greatly increased. Then they all answered that 'he should still be their captain, by all means.'

One man named O'Brien had a swelled knee, and elected to remain with the natives, whom he thought he might conciliate by making them little trinkets out of the lead and pewter cast ashore, and having recovered from his ailment, and learned their language, might better be able to get away. Him, therefore, they left (little knowing the tender mercies of those to whom he so pitifully intrusted himself); 'but Mr. Logie, the chief mate, being ill, was carried by two men in a hammock slung upon a pole.'

The whole company then began to move westward, followed by many of the natives, 'who took whatever they chose from them, and occasionally threw stones.' Presently they met thirty Caffres, whose hair, instead of being crisp and curly like the rest, was made up in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and whose faces were painted red. Among them was a Dutchman called Trout, who spoke

English. They offered him an immense sum if he would conduct them to the Cape ; but he replied that it was impossible. He had murdered several of his own countrymen, and therefore could not venture among them again ; besides, having a wife and children among the Caffres, to whom he had fled for refuge, he was averse to leave them, even if the tribe would have let him go, which he was well assured they would not. As to the journey, he informed them (as it turned out only too truly) that it would be attended with unspeakable difficulties, arising from the cruel nations through which they would have to pass, desert lands, and wild beasts.

Greatly depressed, the party moved on, every day harassed by the natives, who when the sun went down invariably retired. The poor unarmed Englishmen could do little against men armed with lances and protected by targets made of elephant's hide, and in the end they had always to sue for peace, cutting the buttons from their coats, and offering such trinkets as they possessed, to buy off

their assailants. One day they plundered the gentlemen of their watches, and the ladies of some diamonds they had concealed in their hair ; on another they took from them what was far more valuable, their one tinder-box, flint, and steel.

After this loss every one travelled with a fire-brand in his hand to guard against the wild beasts at night. Fresh water they generally found by digging in the sand, but their provisions were now nearly all expended, and dissension for the first time appeared among the unhappy band. 'The fatigue of travelling with the women and children being very great, the sailors began to murmur.'

We should pause before condemning these men, though they may deserve condemnation, to consider what some of us at least might have done in their case. It was morally certain that to advance as they were at present doing, by slow degrees, was to perish. Some hoped, no doubt, that by making quicker progress they might get help, and return for the rest, as indeed some did. Moreover, the

same chivalry is hardly to be expected (though in these narratives it will be seen that it was often found) among uneducated persons as in those of gentler mould ; it may even be added—to be quite fair—that when it is exhibited they do not get the same credit for it. For an officer to run away in battle is actually more difficult, because it is more disgraceful than for a common soldier. In this case almost all the officers, including the captain, remained with the ladies and children, and ‘many of the sailors, induced by the great promises made by Colonel James and others, were prevailed to stay with them, to carry what little provision was left, and the blankets with which they covered themselves in the night.’ A Captain Talbot, three of the ship’s mates, one or two gentlemen and their servants, with the remainder of the seamen, among whom was John Hynes, ‘being in all forty-three,’ made up the forward party.

A young boy, Master Law, a passenger, between seven and eight years old, crying after one of these, a passenger, and having no



surviving relatives of his own, was taken with them, it being agreed that they should carry him by turns whenever he should be unable to walk. It is not to be supposed that this separation of the two parties took place in anger or bad feeling on either side. Indeed, the next day, when those who had left the captain's company, having had to wait all night beside a river for the ebb tide, were overtaken by the rest, the meeting between them was most affecting, and once more they all travelled on as before. Nay, all the shell-fish, oysters, mussels, and limpets they could find on the sea-shore, although their other provisions were now quite expended, were that day, we are told, reserved solely for the women and children. Arriving at a Caffre village, where the Dutchman Trout lived, they were wickedly ill-treated by the inhabitants; and by his advice, since in smaller numbers they would be less likely to arouse the jealousy of the natives, they once more separated, 'never to meet again.' From this moment, unless from hearsay, we have only the record

of what may be called the sailors' party, narrated by John Hynes.

They kept along the coast-line as well as they could; but the frequent rivers, too deep and swift to be crossed by those who could not swim well, often compelled them to journey inland. Here we see how, not only in time of shipwreck, but afterward, the art of swimming, so easily acquired in youth, is so valuable. If it had not been for these diversions from their course more lives would certainly have been saved, as they had to take to the woods, where sorrel 'and such wild berries as they observed the birds to peck at,' and which they therefore knew were not poisonous, were their only food, and where wild beasts devoured them at night. When the rivers grew somewhat narrower, they lashed together all the dry wood they could collect with woodbines and their handkerchiefs, and on the raft thus formed they set the little boy and those who could not swim, while the others pushed it over. In this way they sometimes crossed rivers two miles broad.

The country now grew mountainous, and much more difficult to traverse. They saw no paths but such as were made by lions and tigers, against which they had to make up huge fires at night ; yet even these were preferable to such fellow-creatures as were to be found in that inhospitable land. Every morning, while their strength lasted, one of their number climbed a tree to examine the direction of the coast-line, to which they kept as close as was possible. They presently became too weak to gather fuel for more than one fire, into which they put the few oysters and mussels they could collect, as they had no other means (having been long ago plundered of their knives) to open them. Their watches, as I have said, were gone, and the sun was their only timepiece. At first with a nail fashioned into a knife they cut notches in a stick for week-days, and one across for Sundays ; but they lost the stick in crossing a river, after which 'days, weeks, and months' went by without record. One day they found a dead whale upon the shore, a sight which

filled them with ecstasy. As they had no means of cutting it up, they made a fire upon it, after which they cut out the parts thus grilled with oyster-shells.

The sight of a fine level country now led them to hope that they had got beyond Caffraria and reached the Dutch settlements. This caused them to strike inland, but they had soon to return to the coast again for food.

The strength of the whole party now began to fail. Captain Talbot sat down several times to rest himself, and the rest did the same; 'but the captain repeating this too often through weariness,' they presently went on and left him. His faithful servant, however, observing his master in that condition, went back, and was observed to sit down by him. 'Neither of the two was ever more seen or heard of.'

The wanderers still occasionally came across the natives. Once, on arriving at a village, they obtained a young bullock in exchange for buttons, a few of which the savages had left on their coats; and that the distribu-

tion of this godsend might be equal, the whole was cut in pieces, and, just as we have seen done with a cake at school, one of the party, standing with his back to it, named the person who should have the piece held up. But generally the natives denied them everything. Once they strove to barter some poor relic of their property for a calf, which the others appeared to agree to, 'but no sooner had they got the price than the calf was driven away.'

On one occasion only did they exhibit the slightest pity. On the party coming upon another dead whale, a band of natives surrounded them, but on perceiving their sad condition, and that there was really nothing more to steal, they forebore to molest them. and one of them even lent his lance, with which some chunks of blubber were cut out.

A little afterwards they found two planks on a sandy bank, in each of which was a nail. 'Elated,' as we are told, 'with this valuable discovery,' they set fire to the planks, and getting out the nails, 'flattened them between

two stones into something like knives.' A few yards further on, by turning up the sand, they found water, of which they had been much in want ; and here, with much thankfulness, they rested. This was the last day of what seemed to these poor souls good fortune.

They did indeed fall in with a dead shark, but it was in such an advanced stage of decay that 'the liver only could be eaten.' Nay, driven by the extremity of hunger, the carpenter ate of some deadly berries, and was poisoned. Now this man it was who from the first, until the hour of his death, had taken care of the little boy ; who had striven to relieve those fatigues which his tender limbs could so little endure ; 'who had heard his complaints with pity ; who had fed him when he could obtain wherewithal to do it,' and who had lulled his weary little body to rest.

No human work more commends itself to our admiration than that of this poor carpenter, who reminds us, indeed, of the Carpenter's Son with His 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.' Even at this distant time, when that

poor boy has been a hundred years 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest,' the tears rise to our eyes when we think of his forlorn condition, deprived of his noble protector.

'I will take him,' said the steward, however, who had now succeeded to the command ; and that good man kept his word. The natives never gave them so much as a drink of water, though 'now and then the women gave a draught of milk to the little boy,' and the whole party began to break down from sheer fatigue and privation. When this took place, from hard necessity there was no chance but for the rest to leave them.

Only they never dreamed of leaving the boy. 'It was marvellous,' we are told, how he supported the journey (and, alas! how much more marvellous, since he was fated not to survive it after all). 'Where the path was even and good,' says John Hynes, in his simple fashion, 'the child walked, and was able to keep pace with the party ; when they came to deep sand or long grass, the people

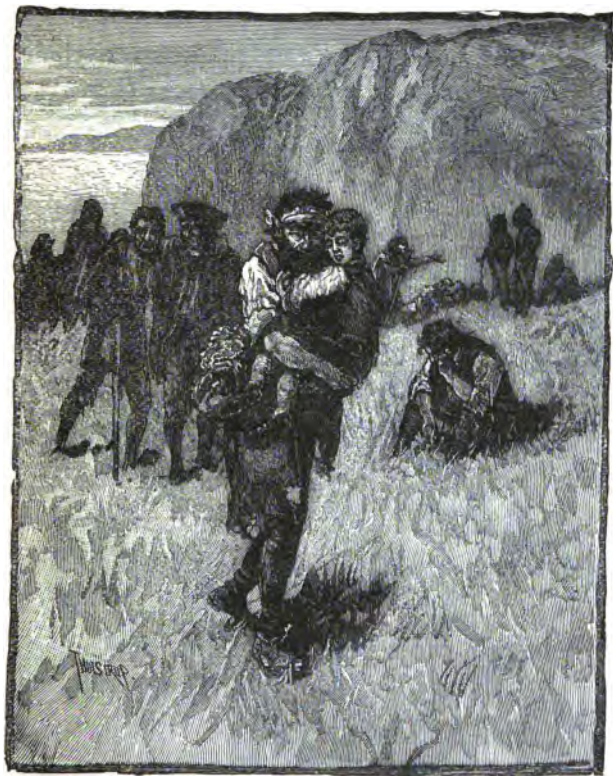
carried him by turns.' His only duty was to keep their fire alight while they explored the sand for food.

It will be remembered that, having no flint and steel, they always carried torches ; and once, in rounding a bluff to shorten the way, the surf put them out ; they came, however, upon the remains of a fire which some Caffre women had lighted, 'and joyfully rekindled them.' In crossing the rivers where there was a ford, they tied their rags in a bundle, fastened it round their heads, and in it they stuck their brands, and thus kept them dry. Sometimes great storms would come on, and the rain fall so heavily that the men had to hold their canvas frocks over their fire to prevent its being extinguished. Without fire they would have been lost indeed.

Many times, from causes over which they had no control, the little party separated, but they never forgot one another. Those before used to write upon the sand whatever direction could be of benefit to those behind, such as, 'Turn in here, and you will find wood and



water.' It makes the heart bleed to think that so much tenderness and good-fellowship,



*'THEY CARRIED HIM BY TURNS.'*

maintained under such trying circumstances, should have failed in the end, and have been

shown, as it were, for nothing. And yet it was not for nothing. It is impossible to believe that those brave men have not gained their reward, and a great reward for their terrible sufferings. And as to 'use,' it should be of great and good use to us all to have such an example set before us.

Sometimes those left behind would turn up again, having proceeded, when a little refreshed, by some shorter way ; but they had always the same tale of ill-usage and privation to tell. Hynes himself, having been wounded by the natives, was left for dead on one occasion ; but recollecting the way his companions intended to pursue, by great exertions he overtook them. 'I shall bear the scar of that lance wound to my grave,' he says.

One day the cooper died, and was buried in the sand. This happened in Hynes' absence, and as he had an affection for the man, he asked to be shown the spot ; but on arriving at it, the body had already been dug up and carried away by some wild animal, as could be perceived by its foot-prints. The steward and

his charge were now taken ill, and since the rest could not find it in their hearts to leave the child, they stayed with him. 'Having prepared early in the morning whatever could be obtained for breakfast, and willing to treat his tender frame with all the indulgence in their power, they meant to call him when everything was ready. He still rested near the fire, where all had slept during the night before ; but on going to wake him, they found his soul had taken flight to another world.' These are the words in which John Hynes describes the misfortune which he evidently considers the worst that had hitherto befallen them. As for the steward, 'the loss,' we are told, 'of one who had been so long the object of his care nearly overcame him. It was with the utmost difficulty that his companions got him along.'

Presently Robert Fitzgerald asks for a shell of water ; Hynes supplies him with one, which he drinks with great avidity. He then asks for another, which, 'having received, he swallows with equal relish, and laying himself

down, instantly expires.' They all thought this a very happy death, and were envious of it. Then William Fruel sinks exhausted on the sand; his companions from necessity go on to seek wood and water, but promise to return to him. Turning their eyes back, they see him crawling after them; but on returning for him after a few hours, they find some wild beast has carried him away.

It would be painful to describe in detail what they now suffered; 'former distresses were not to be compared to it.' One after another drops from exhaustion; the rest 'shake hands with him, and recommending him to Heaven for that assistance which they themselves cannot afford, leave him to expire.' The party of forty-three are at length reduced to three, John Hynes, Evans, and Wormington, and the senses of even these are so impaired that they can hardly hear or see. One morning the torments of thirst become so intolerable that Wormington begs the two others to cast lots with him as to who shall die for the rest, that by drinking his blood the other

two may survive. To which Hynes replies that if he (Hynes) drops, they may do what they will with him, but as long as he can walk he will consent to no such thing. The idea is then abandoned by common consent, nor is it renewed when Wormington falls, and 'with one feeble effort to rise, stretches himself on the shore, burying his right hand in the sand.'

The next morning the two survivors perceive some objects which to their failing powers look like 'large birds.' They turn out to be four of their own party, who had been left behind, now nearly blind and almost reduced to idiocy. It was a most ghastly meeting. Since they could no longer search narrowly for food, they would certainly have now starved to death but for watching the motions of certain sea-birds, which, after scratching in the sand, they perceived let something drop out of their beaks. On searching for themselves, the poor men found that the birds were catching shell-fish which had burrowed in the sand.

On the one hundred and seventeenth day of their journey (though they knew nothing themselves of dates) these six unfortunates at last met with a European—a Dutch settler. ‘Their joy was such that, combined with their weak condition, it could only be expressed by convulsive movements.’ But ‘after gaining some composure,’ they learned they were within the limits of the settlement, and not above three hundred miles from the Cape of Good Hope.

They were received with the utmost hospitality, which it seemed was offered with some imprudence, since on being supplied with bread and milk, ‘their voracity was such as to have almost proved their destruction.’ After being carefully nursed, and in some degree recovered, they were forwarded in carts to the nearest town, which was two hundred miles distant. ‘During the whole way, wherever they passed the night, the farmers assembling to hear their sad story, and supplying them with all of which they stood in need.’

Nay, notwithstanding that England and

Holland were then at war, the Dutch Governor of the Cape of Good Hope despatched a very strong expedition through the country in quest of the other castaways, should any still remain. They met William Hubberley, servant of the second mate, staggering on alone, 'melancholy and forlorn.' On other parts of the road they met seven Lascars and two of the black female servants. From these they learned that five days after the ship's company had separated another division of the party took place, but what had become of the others they knew not. They had seen the Captain's coat, however, on one of the natives, from which they gathered that he was dead. No further information could be obtained, and so violent was the opposition of the Caffres that the expedition was compelled to return.

Seven years afterwards Colonel Gordon, while travelling in Caffraria, was informed by a native that there was a white woman among his countrymen, with a child whom she frequently embraced, and over whom she wept bitterly. Bad health compelled the Colonel

to return home, but he sent her a letter in French, Dutch, and English, begging that some sign, such as a burned stick, or other token, might be returned in answer to it, when every exertion should be made for her recovery ; but nothing more was ever heard of her. Nevertheless, for years there was a general belief at the Cape that some of the unfortunate ladies still survived, who had it in their power to return, but that having been compelled to marry Caffre chieftains, and ' apprehending that their place in society was lost, and that they should be degraded in the eyes of their equals,' they resolved to abide where they were.



*THE LOSS OF THE 'ROYAL GEORGE.'*

IN a letter which Miss Martineau once showed me, from a relative of hers, long dead, addressed to her great-niece from Southsea, near Portsmouth, and dated August 9, 1782, there occurred this singular passage :

‘The day is calm and pleasant, and as I sit at the open window, the great vessel in the offing, betwixt me and the Fair Island’ (the Isle of Wight used to be so called), ‘seems to sway not a hand-breath, nor to flutter a single pennant.’ Then, in a trembling hand, but still the same, was added : ‘A dreadful thing has happened. When I had written that beginning of my letter, Dorothy, I looked again southward ; the sea was waveless as before, and the Fair Island sparkled in the sun, but betwixt us and it I saw no trace of the great three-decker. I thought my brain

had gone wrong, and rang the bell for Agnes; but when she too could see nothing of her, a terrible apprehension took hold of me; and when the alarm-guns from the fort began to thunder, I knew the vessel had gone down. I hear near a thousand men were aboard of her.'

This was the famous 'wreck of the "Royal George",' immortalised by the verse of Cowper. She was a ship of one hundred guns, carrying brass 24-pounders on her main deck, brass 32-pounders on her middle deck, and iron 32-pounders on her lower deck. Her lanterns were so large that the men used to enter them to clean them. She had six months' provisions on board, and many tons of shot. The blue flag of the 'brave Kempenfelt' was flying at her mizzen, and in two days she was to leave Spithead to join the fleet in the Mediterranean.

So sudden and unexpected a catastrophe was never before heard of in nautical annals; but the cause of it is common enough. It arose from the obstinacy and fool-hardiness of the lieutenant of the watch. These caused

the death of some eight hundred human beings. It is not necessary to mention his name; indeed, the sailor from whose personal narrative I compile the story, and who had probably just joined the ship, did not know his name, though of course it could be discovered easily enough. 'He was, if I remember right,' he says, 'the third lieutenant, a good-sized man between thirty and forty.' Fortunately for himself, perhaps, he was drowned with the rest.

The accident arose through the heeling over of the ship. It was necessary to lay her on her side to get at the water-cock, situated in that part of the hold called the well, in order to replace it by a new one. The operation was begun at eight o'clock in the morning. The ship at that time was 'full of Jews, women, and people selling all sorts of things,' as was usual on the eve of a long voyage. The last lighter, with rum on board, had just come alongside, and was lashed to the larboard side of the vessel, and the men were piped to clear her, and stow the rum in the

hold. Though the water was almost level with the port-holes through which the larboard guns were run out, no danger seems at first to have been apprehended. The sea dashed in with every wave, and disturbed the mice in the lower deck, and the men amused themselves with hunting them in the water. 'There was a rare game going on,' are the words of the narrator.

By nine o'clock the weight of the rum barrels and of the sea water brought the larboard port-holes still lower, and the carpenter applied to the third lieutenant to give orders to 'right ship, as she could not bear it.' But the lieutenant gave him a very short answer. The captain—Captain Waghorn—was on board, and also the admiral; but admirals and captains are not consulted in such matters. The lives of those at sea, as of those on land, are mainly in the hands of subordinates. In a very short time the carpenter repeated his warning, and the lieutenant answered, 'Sir, if you can manage the ship better than I can, you had better take

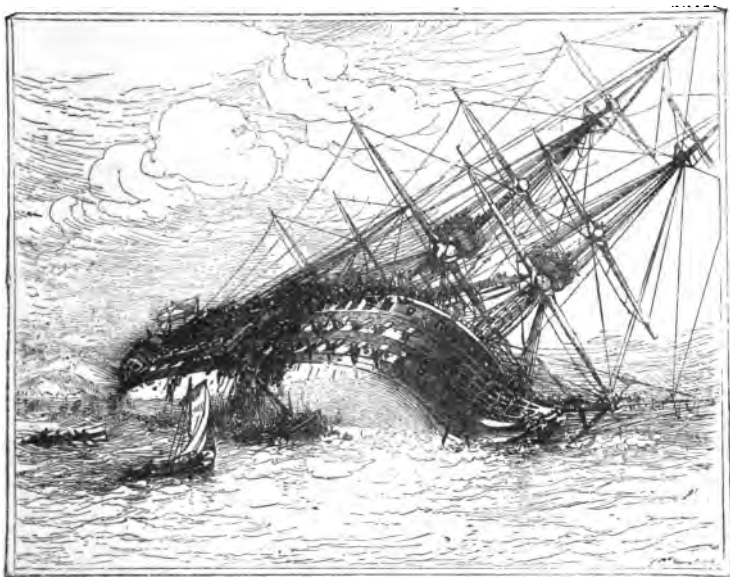
the command.' In a minute or two afterward, it is true, the fool-hardy officer ordered the drummer to be called to beat to right ship, but it was then too late. There was no time to beat his drum, or even time to get it. 'Let us try,' said our sailor to the lieutenant of his gun, 'to bouse our gun out without waiting for the drum, as it will help to right the ship.' They pushed the gun, but it ran back on them, and they could not start it. 'Then I cried, "Ned, the ship is sinking, jump out at the port-hole!" He did so, but I believe he was drowned, for I never saw him again. I followed him. *I saw the port-holes as full of heads as they could cram, all trying to get out.*'

What a picture! Imagine all those poor fellows struggling to escape through a space not large enough for one-tenth of them, up an incline as steep as the peaked roof of a house, and with a hungry sea rushing in behind them! Above all, think of the poor women! Our sailor, holding on to the best-bower anchor, which hung above the port, seizes hold of one, and drags her out, but at

that moment the draught of air from between-decks, caused by the sinking of the ship, blows him off his feet. Then the huge mass goes down, and draws him down with it. He tries to swim, but cannot, 'though I plunged as hard as I could with both hands and feet ; but when the ship touched bottom, the water boiled up a good deal, and I felt that I could swim, and began to rise.' So, even if a vessel with a hundred guns goes down and takes you or me with her, there is some use, you see, in having learned to swim. When he comes to the surface he hears—what a sound at such a moment!—the cannons ashore firing their signals of distress, but he can see nothing. His face is covered with tar, a barrel of tar having been staved in as the ship went down, and its contents spread over the water. He strikes it away from his eyes as well as he can, and looks about him.

The fore, main, and mizzen tops of the huge ship were all above water, and he climbs up into comparative safety. In the shrouds

of the mizzen-top he finds the admiral's baker, and sees the woman he has just pulled out of the port-hole rolling by. He seizes her once more, and hangs her head over one of



'I SAW THE PORT-HOLES AS FULL OF HEADS AS THEY COULD  
CRAM.'

the ratlines of the mizzen-shrouds, like clothes to dry, which is the best he can do for her; but a surf comes and knocks her backward, and 'away she went, rolling over and over.'

Strangely enough, the poor creature is saved after all by the boat of a frigate lying at Spithead, whose captain has just put off to the rescue. 'I must look to those who are in more danger than you, my lad,' he sings out to our sailor, as he goes by.

'Ay, ay, sir,' is the reply; 'I am safely moored enough.'

The captain of the 'Royal George,' though, strange to say, he could not swim, was picked up alive. But out of nearly a thousand men, which was the ship's complement, although some were on leave, and sixty marines had gone ashore that very morning, only a very few were saved: Government allowed five pounds to them for the loss of their things. 'I saw the list, and there were but seventy-five.'

For several days afterward bodies would suddenly come up to the surface at the spot where the ship had sank, 'forty and fifty at a time. The watermen made a good thing of it; they would take from the men their buckles, money, and watches; then, making



fast a rope to their heels, would tow them to land.'

The poet who sings of the calamity tells us 'no tempest gave the shock,' and indeed there was scarcely any breeze at all. The ship was anchored, and had not even a stitch of canvas on her to keep her steady.

Sixty years afterwards the interest of this terrible event had by no means died away, and I well remember, as a boy, going on board the ship that was stationed above the scene of the calamity, to see the divers who were still employed upon the wreck. The aspiration of the poet,

Weigh the vessel up,  
Once dreaded by her foes,

was never realised ; but almost everything was taken out of her ; and more fancy articles—paper-knives, work-boxes, &c.—affirmed to have been made from her timbers, were sold, I am afraid, than the 'Royal George,' big as she was, could ever have furnished. At our seaside places of resort you may purchase

them even now at the bazaars—old fashioned articles, with this tomb-like inscription on them : ‘ This desk ’ (or letterweight, or paper-knife) ‘ was made out of the wood of the “ Royal George,” sunk off Spithead in 1782, with eight hundred of her crew.’

*ON THE KEYS OF HONDURAS.*

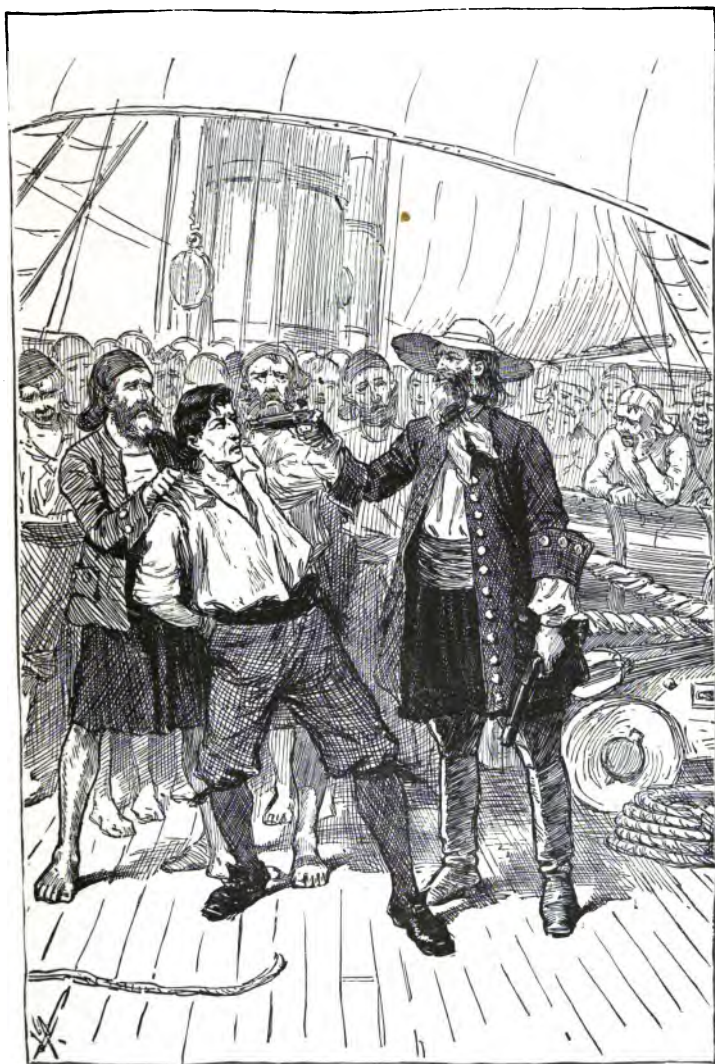
MOST readers know well the adventures of the real personage on which the admirable story of 'Robinson Crusoe' was founded ; and in the history of disaster connected with the sea there are the materials of ten such tales, had we only another Defoe to write them. Still, not even the mind of that master of fiction, the man of all others who knew how 'to make the thing that is not as the thing that is,' could have conceived such events as it is now my purpose to describe. His fine sense of what was life-like would have resented them as being too amazing and extraordinary to have happened to the same person, and that too on a single voyage.

To be seized by pirates ; to become one of them by force ; to escape at the peril of one's life, but only to find oneself upon an uninhabited

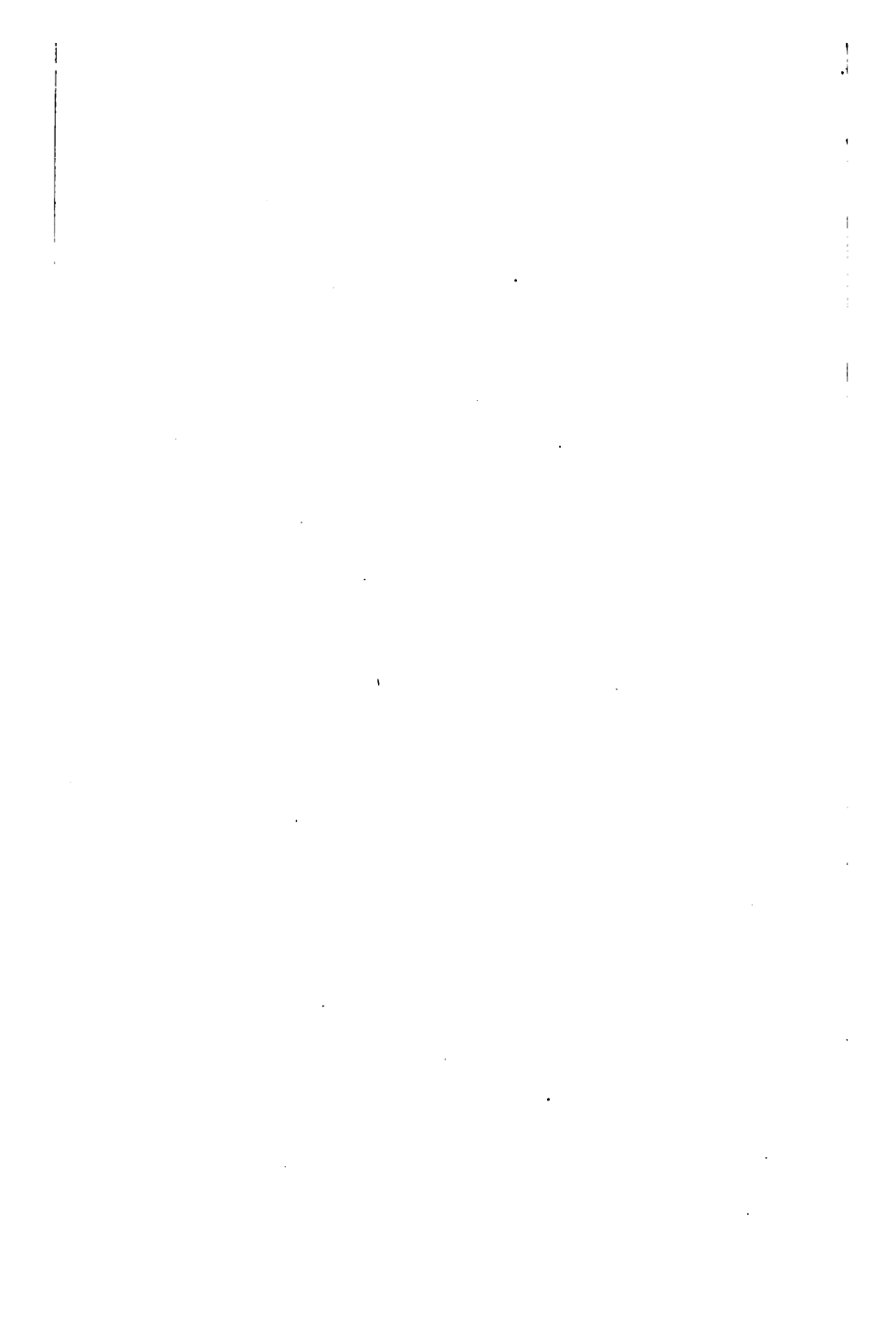
island, 'remote from the track of navigation,' and to remain there for sixteen months alone—seems too much 'sensation' to be crowded into three years of existence. Yet these things happened to Philip Ashton, an Englishman, little more than a century and a half ago.

The schooner of which Ashton, who hailed from Salem, Massachusetts, was on board was seized in Port Rossaway by the famous—or infamous—Ned Low. In 'The Lives of Highwaymen and Robbers,' which I am sorry to say was one of my favourite books when I was a boy, the story of Low's life is told, but his behaviour in pirate life is not described. Ashton gives some curious particulars of it. In some respects this 'bold bad' rover of the seas was by no means so black as he is painted. For example, on our hero's being carried on board Low's vessel, 'which had two great guns, four swivels, and about forty men,' that gentleman comes up to him with a pistol in each hand, with the inquiry, 'Are you a married man?'

Terrified, not without reason, 'lest there



*'You dog, why don't you answer?' cried Low.*



should be any hidden meaning in his words,' Ashton did not reply. He did not know whether it would be wiser to say he was married or a bachelor. You see, it was very important to make a favourable impression.

'You dog, why don't you answer?' cried Low, cocking one of the pistols and putting it to the other's ear. Thus compelled, and yet not knowing what to say, Ashton hesitated no longer, but did what he might have done at first, and which is always the best thing to do—he told the truth.

'I am a bachelor,' he said, whereupon Low appeared to be satisfied, and turned away.

The fact was that this scoundrel, who seemed so heartless, had had a wife of his own whom he had loved tenderly, but who was dead. She had left him a child, now in the care of trustworthy people at Boston, for whom he felt such tenderness that on any mention of him, in quieter moments—that is, 'when he was not drinking or revelling'—he would sit down and shed tears. Judging others by himself, he would never impress into

his service married men who had ties, such as a wife and children, to render them desirous of leaving it.

Moreover, Low would never suffer his men to work on Sunday. What is still more strange, Ashton tells us that he has even 'seen some of them sit down to read a good book upon that day.'

For all that, he had to join the ship's company, and become a pirate like them, or die. His name was accordingly entered on their books; whereas, when opportunity offered, the married men who had been captured were put on shore.

Ashton was sometimes fired at, and slashed with cutlasses, upon the supposition—which was quite a correct one—that he was planning how to escape. Otherwise he was not, on the whole, ill-treated. He assisted, much against his own will, in the capture of many vessels.

Though very successful in her depredations, the pirate ship was at one time pursued by 'The Mermaid,' an English man-of-war, when Ashton's feelings were more uncomfort-



able than they had ever been, 'for I concluded that we should certainly be taken, and that I, being found in such company, should be hung with the rest, so true are the words of Solomon, "A companion of fools shall be destroyed."'

However, one of the ship's men showed Low a sand bar over which his vessel could pass and 'The Mermaid' could not. 'So we escaped the gallows on this occasion.'

Nor was it only hanging that was to be feared, for it was proposed by these desperate fellows that in case their capture became certain, they should 'set foot to foot and blow out each other's brains'—a suggestion which, though he pretended to approve of it, did not please Ashton.

There was now a plot among the more honest portion of the crew to overpower the rest. It was unfortunately discovered, and one Farrington Spriggs, the second in command, informed Ashton that he should 'swing like a dog at the end of the yard-arm,' as being one of the conspirators. To this our hero

meekly replied that he had had no intention of injuring any one on board, but should be glad if he could be allowed to go away quietly.

Perhaps this soft answer had the effect of turning away Mr. Farrington Spriggs' wrath, for Ashton presently remarks, 'In the end this flame was quenched, and, through the goodness of Providence, I escaped destruction.'

About this time they were in the Bay of Honduras, which is full of small wooded islands, generally known in that part of the world as 'keys.'

At one of these, which lay altogether out of the track of ships, the pirate touched for water, and the long-boat was sent ashore with casks to get a supply. Low had sworn that Ashton 'should never set foot on shore again,' but that chieftain was not on board at the time, and the cooper, who was in charge of the boat, granted his request to go with the party. As to running away, there was nowhere, as he reflected, for the man to run to.

When they first landed, Ashton made him-

self very busy in helping to get the casks out of the boat and in rolling them to the spring ; but presently he began to stroll along the beach, picking up shells. On getting out of musket-shot, he made for a thick wood.

‘Where are you going?’ cried the cooper.

‘Only for cocoa-nuts,’ was Ashton’s reply, pointing to where some were hanging.

When once out of sight he ran as fast as the thickness of the bushes and his naked feet permitted him. His clothing was an ‘Osna-burgh frock and trousers, and a knitted cap, bût neither shirt, shoes, stockings, nor anything else.’

The wood was so thick that he could hear the voices of the party while he himself was quite invisible and secure.

When they had filled their casks they hallooed for him loudly, and then said to one another, ‘The dog’—they always called him the dog—‘is lost in the wood, and can’t get out again.’ In a short time they put off without him.

Then came reflections very similar to

those we read in 'Robinson Crusoe': 'Thus was I left on a desolate island, destitute of all help, and remote from the track of navigators, but, compared with the state and society I had quitted, I considered the wilderness hospitable and the solitude interesting. True, I was in a place where there was no means of leaving; my clothing was scanty, and it was impossible to procure a supply. With the trifling exception of cocoa-nuts, I was altogether destitute of provisions, nor could I tell how my life was to be supported. But as it had pleased God to grant my wishes in being liberated from those whose occupation was to devise mischief against their neighbours, I resolved to account every hardship light.'

In five days the pirate vessel set sail without him, and Philip Ashton found himself alone.

Ashton's first task was to range the island. It proved to be thirty miles or so in length, but its only inhabitants were birds and beasts; it was well watered, and full of hills and deep valleys.

In the latter were many fruit trees, and also vines and currant bushes. There was one tree which bore a fruit larger than an orange, oval-shaped, and brown without and red within. This he dared not touch until he saw the wild dogs eating it, lest it should be poisonous. Fruit was his only food. He had no weapon to kill any animal, or the means of cooking it when killed. One often reads of producing fire by friction, but unless one has flint and steel this is very difficult. Some savages only know the secret of it, and it is doubtful whether any white man has ever succeeded in the feat. In Philip Ashton's island there were no matches.

He found tortoise eggs in the sand, which he dug up with a stick, 'sometimes a hundred and fifty of them at a time.' These he ate, or strung on a strip of palmetto and hung them in the sun. They were very hard and tough, but he was glad to get them. Enormous serpents, twelve and fourteen feet long, were numerous. When they were lying at full length he often took them for 'old trunks of

trees covered with short moss,' and was much astonished when they opened their mouths and hissed at him.

What annoyed him much more, however, were the 'small black flies,' which harassed him in myriads. To escape them he longed to swim over to a small 'key,' which, being without trees, and exposed to the wind, was probably free from those pests. He was, however, a very indifferent swimmer, and had no canoe nor the means of making one.

At last he hit on the idea of putting a piece of bamboo, which is as hollow as a reed and light as a cork, under his chest and arms, and so trusted himself to the sea.

Once the bamboo slipped from under him, and he was nearly drowned. At another time a shovel-nosed shark struck him on the thigh, and but for the shallowness of the water, 'which prevented its mouth getting round' at him, he would have perished miserably. Practice, however, soon made him a good swimmer, and in spite of the

sharks he swam over to the little island daily to escape the flies.

He had built a hut, if it could be called such, by taking fallen branches and fastening them by means of split palmetto leaves to the hanging boughs. This sheltered him from the noonday sun and the heavy night dews. The entrance of this hut 'was made to look toward the sea,' in hopes of rescue.

'I had had the approbation of my father and mother,' he piously reflects, 'in going to sea, and I trusted it would please God in His own time and manner to provide for my return to my father's house.'

But in the meantime he endured frightful sufferings. His feet became very sore from walking on 'the hot beach, with its sharp broken shells,' and sometimes, 'though treading with all possible caution,' a shell on the beach or a stick in the woods would open an old wound, inflicting such agony that he would fall down suddenly as if he had been shot. Rather than risk any more such misery, he would sometimes sit for a whole day, with

his back against a tree, looking with tearful eyes for the vessel that never came.

Once, when faint from such injuries, a wild boar ran at him. He could not stand, but caught at the bough of the tree above him, and hung suspended while the beast made his charge. 'He tore away a portion of my ragged trousers, and then went on his way, which I considered to have been a very great deliverance.'

These hardships, and the living almost entirely on fruit, brought him to great extremities. He 'often fell to the ground insensible,' and thought every night would be his last. He lost count of the days of the week, and then of the month. The rainy season came on, and he grew worse.

At one time—as he judged, in November—he saw a sight which, had he been himself, would have filled him with joy. He beheld a small canoe approaching the shore, with a single man in it. The spectacle excited little emotion. 'I kept my seat on the beach, thinking that I could not expect a friend, and being in no condition to resist an enemy.'





*Ashton protecting himself from the wild boar.*



The stranger called out to him in English, and Ashton replied that he might safely land, for that he was the only inhabitant of the island, and as good as dead.

The whole incident is most curious, but the strangest fact of all is the unenthusiastic terms in which our hero describes the matter.

It is clear he must have been almost at death's door. This stranger proved to be 'a native of North Britain'; Scotchmen were then so called. 'He was well advanced in years, and of a spare and venerable aspect, and of a reserved temper. . . . He informed me he had lived two-and-twenty years with the Spaniards, who now threatened to burn him, for what crime I did not know. He had fled to the "key" as an asylum, bringing with him his dog, gun, ammunition, and also a small quantity of pork.' Ashton goes on to say that the stranger showed him much kindness, and gave him 'some of his pork.'

On the third day after his arrival, the new-comer prepared to make an excursion in his canoe to some of the neighbouring islands

for the purpose of killing deer. Our hero, though much cheered by his society, and especially by the fire, the means of kindling which the other had brought with him, and by eating cooked food, was too weak and sore-footed to accompany him. The sky was cloudless, and the man had already come six-and-thirty miles in safety, so that their parting seemed only a 'good-day.'

But it was final. A storm arose within the hour, in which his visitor doubtless perished.

What is very singular, Ashton never had the curiosity to ask him his name; and though our hero found himself so suddenly deprived of his companion, and reduced to his former lonely state, he consoled himself with the reflection that he was in far better circumstances than before. He had 'pork, a knife, a bottle of gunpowder, tobacco, tongs, and a flint.' He could now cut up a turtle and boil it.

Three months afterward another canoe came on shore, but without a tenant. The

possession of this vessel was a somewhat doubtful boon to him. He rowed in it to another 'key' miles away, where, having landed, he lay down to sleep, with his face to the sea, as usual, and his back to a tree.

'I was awakened by a noise of firing, and starting up beheld nine piraguas [large canoes] full of men, all firing at me. I ran among the bushes as fast as my sore feet would allow, while they called after me, "Surrender yourself, O Englishman, and we will give you good quarter."' By their firing at an in-offensive man Ashton knew that they were Spaniards, and guessed what was their idea of 'good quarter.' After hiding in the woods for that night he returned to his little island the next day, and to the hut of boughs, 'which now seemed a royal palace to me.'

After nineteen months' residence alone on this spot, save for that three days' visit from the stranger, Ashton was joined by seventeen Englishmen, fugitives from Spanish cruelty. They were accustomed to hardships and miseries, but 'they started back in horror at

the sight of so wild, ragged, and wretched an object.'

A spoonful of rum which they administered to him almost took away his life, owing to his long disuse of strong liquors. They clothed and fed him, and were very good to him, though 'in their common conversation,' as he naïvely remarks, 'there was very little difference between them and pirates.'

Considering what he had gone through, one is inclined to wonder how Mr. Philip Ashton could have been so very particular. He seems, however, to have been an honest man, and did not forget to express his earnest gratitude to Providence when rescued at last by a British sloop driven near his 'key' by stress of weather. He arrived home at Salem in March, 1725, having spent eight months on board a pirate ship, and nineteen on the 'key.' 'That same evening,' he says, 'I went to my father's house, where I was received as one risen from the dead.'



### *THE LOSS OF THE 'HALSEWELL.'*

ON Sunday, the 1st of January, 1786, the 'Halsewell,' a vessel of 758 tons burden, bound for the East Indies, sailed through the Downs with a fair wind and under exceptionally favourable circumstances. She had a well-trying commander, Captain Pierce, good officers, and a numerous crew. To these were added a considerable number of soldiers of 'John Company,' as the East India Company was called, so that security seemed assured both by sea and land.

There were, moreover, several lady passen-

gers aboard, most of whom were known to one another, including the daughters of the captain, two of his cousins, and one still younger lady, Miss Mansell, returning from a school in England to her parents in Madras. The chief mate too was related to Captain Pierce, so that the company in the chief cabin was almost a family party.

On Monday very thick weather came on, so that the ship was compelled to anchor, and on Tuesday a gale arose that obliged her to cut her cables and run out to sea. The gale grew to a tempest, which continued for three days, and on Friday night the ship ended her voyage.

At two in the morning of that day she was driving to her doom on the sharp rocks between Peverel Point and St. Alban's Head, in Dorsetshire. These rocks run sheer down to the sea, so that to approach them even in fine weather is fraught with danger.

There is a story told by the great humorist Thomas Hood of a terrible scene on board ship, when every one was running about dis-



tracted with fear, save one cheerful old lady. 'There is nothing whatever to be alarmed at,' she said, when some one asked her how it was she showed such courage, 'for the captain has just told me we are "running on shore."' To her the land seemed like safety. And so it doubtless was with some of the poor ladies on board the 'Halsewell.'

The captain, as they drove nearer the rocky shore on that awful night, consulted with his second mate, Mr. Meriton, as to their chances of escape, and especially with reference to his daughters.

'We can do nothing, sir, but wait for the morning,' was the sad reply ; and even while he spoke the ship struck with a violence that dashed the heads of those standing in the cuddy, as the saloon in an Indiaman was called, against the deck above them.

A frightful scene followed. The sailors had acted ill throughout the storm, and, skulking in their hammocks, had compelled their officers and the soldiers, who behaved admirably, to man the pumps ; but now that

the catastrophe, which they might have helped to avert, was upon them, they exhibited a frantic fear.

The ship lay beating against the rocks, with her broadside towards them, and the captain's advice was that each man should take what opportunity should offer itself to reach the land. The ensign staff was accordingly unshipped, and laid between the ship's side and a rock ; but it snapped asunder with the weight of the first man who attempted to cross, so that there was nothing for the rest to do but to drop into the raging sea, and trust to the waves to carry them to the unknown shore.

This desperate attempt, made by a number of the men, was of course impossible for the ladies, who with the passengers, three black women, and two soldiers' wives, had collected in the roundhouse upon deck to the number of no less than fifty. The captain, whose use was gone in these dreadful straits, sat on a cot with a daughter upon each side, whom he alternately pressed to his breast. The scene

was indescribably mournful. Mr. Meriton procured a quantity of wax candles, and stuck them about the place in which it was their hope to wait for dawn ; then perceiving that the poor women were parched with thirst, he brought a basket of oranges, with which they refreshed themselves. This was the last meal they were ever to take on earth.

At this time they were all tolerably composed, except Miss Mansell, who lay sobbing on the floor. Mr. Meriton thought he perceived that the sides of the ship were visibly giving way ; that her deck was lifting, and that consequently she could not much longer hold together.

On leaving the roundhouse to see whether his suspicions were correct, they received a terrible confirmation. The ship had separated in the middle, and not a moment was to be lost in seizing the slender chance of saving his life. As a great sea struck the ship the poor ladies cried : ' Oh, poor Meriton, he is drowned ! Had he stayed with us he would have been safe.' Whereupon Mr. Rogers,

another officer, offered to go and look for him. This they opposed, lest he should share the same fate.

Rogers and the captain, however, went out with a lantern, but being able to see nothing but the black face of the perpendicular rock, the captain returned to his daughters, and was no more seen. A very heavy sea struck the ship, and burst into the roundhouse, and Mr. Rogers heard the ladies shriek at intervals until the water drowned their voices.

He seized a hen-coop, and was carried by a wave on to a rock, where it left him, miserably bruised, in the company of no less than one hundred and twenty-four persons, among whom he found Mr. Meriton. The meeting between these two was very touching, for they were old friends, and had just survived a calamity, little less terrible, in another Indian, between which event and their present peril an interval of only twenty-five days had elapsed. ' They were prevented, however, from the interchange of mutual congratulations by

at least twenty men between them, none of whom could move without imperilling his life.'

They were, in fact, on the ledge of a cavern overhung by the precipice, as closely packed and with as little room to move in as those sea-birds which we often see clustered on some ridge of rock. The full horror of their situation was, however, hid from them. They could not even see the ship they had just quitted, though in a few minutes a universal shriek, which long vibrated in their ears, and in which the voice of female agony was plainly distinguishable, informed them that she had gone to pieces. Not one atom of the wreck of the 'Halsewell' was ever afterwards beheld.

This terrible incident gave such a shock to the poor trembling wretches on the ledge that many of them, being already unnerved and weak from bruises, lost their feeble hold, and fell upon the rocks below. Their groans and cries for succour increased the misery of the survivors. After three hours, which seemed as many ages, the daylight broke, and revealed

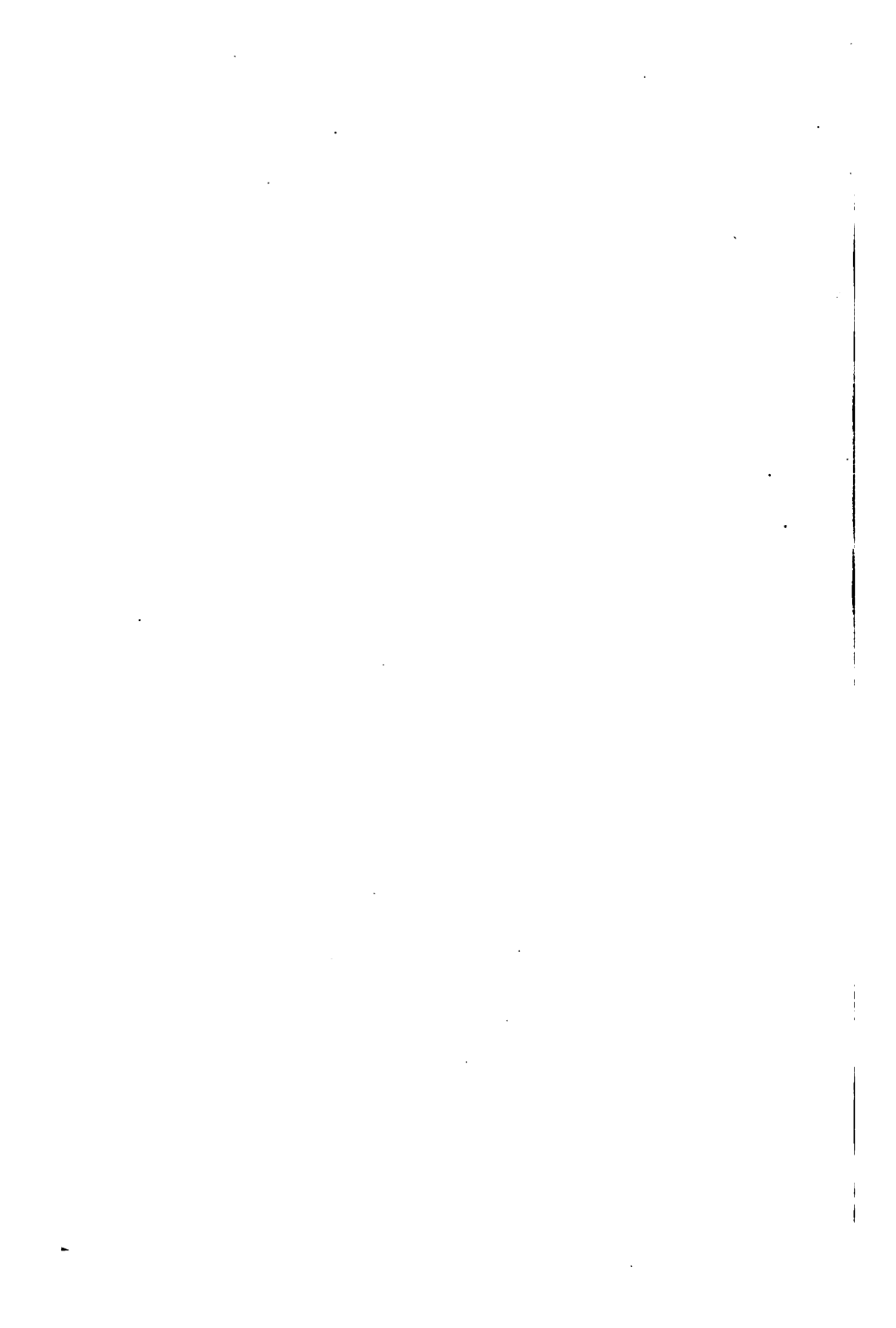
the fact that unless aid was given from the cliff above them, escape was impossible, while the total disappearance of the ship left no evidence of their position, their guns and signals of distress through the night having been unheard by reason of the roaring of the gale.

The only hope of escape was to creep along the ledge to its extremity, and then, on a ridge nearly as broad as a man's hand, to turn a corner, and then scale a precipice almost perpendicular, and two hundred feet in height! Such was the courage of their despair that even this was essayed. What with fear and fatigue, many lost their footing, and perished in the attempt. The cook and quarter-master alone succeeded in reaching the cliff top, and at once hastened to the nearest house.

This chanced to be the residence of the steward of the Purbeck stone quarries, who instantly collected his workmen, and furnished them with ropes. Next to the two men who had escaped, and after an interval in which many must have failed, a soldier and Mr.



*'They pulled with a will when the word was given.'*





Meriton were trying to make their way to the summit, as the quarrymen arrived. They perceived the soldier, and dropped him a rope, of which he laid hold, but in the effort loosened the stone on which he stood, which also supported Mr. Meriton. The latter, however, seized another rope as he was in the very act of falling. He had probably the narrowest escape of all.

The perils of the rest were by no means at an end. The most fortunate crawled to the edge of the ledge and waited for the rope held by two strong men at the very brink of the cliff. Other ropes were tied about them and fastened to an iron bar fixed in the ground. Four other men, standing behind these, also held the rope which was let down, and we may be sure that they pulled with a will when the word was given.

Many of the poor shipwrecked souls, however, were too benumbed and weak to help themselves even thus far ; and for these the rope, with a strong loop at the end of it, had to be let down. The force of the wind blew

the rope into the cavern, when, whoever was so fortunate as to catch it, put the noose round his body and was drawn up. Many even of these perished from nervousness or loss of presence of mind. One especially, who lost his hold, fell into the sea, and, being a strong swimmer, added to the general distress by dying, as it were, by inches before the eyes of the survivors.

It was evening before they found themselves in safety ; indeed, one poor fellow, a soldier, remained in this perilous position until the next morning. On being mustered at the steward's house, they were found to number seventy-four out of a crew of two hundred and fifty.

They were treated with the utmost hospitality, and word of their coming was sent to the towns through which they would have to pass on their way to London, that they might be helped along. 'It is worthy of commemoration,' says the biographer, in which all my readers will agree, 'that the landlord of the Crown Inn at Blandford not only refreshed

all these distressed seamen at his house, but presented each with half-a-crown.'

As one lies on the cliff-top above Peverel Point in the summer sun, with the blue sea below smiling so smoothly, it is difficult to imagine what took place in that unseen cavern beneath, or even the tears of joy which were shed by those who, after such a night of horror, set foot for the first time upon that grassy slope.

*WAGER ISLAND.*

IN 1740 the English fitted out a fleet against the Spaniards, among which was the 'Wager,' an old East Indiaman that had been transformed into a man-of-war.

In those days there were no iron-plated vessels, and the main difference between traders and ships of war lay in their guns. But the 'Wager' was not a good ship, to begin with, and was now laden and encumbered with every description of military stores. Moreover, her crew consisted chiefly of 'pressed men'—men who, having just returned from long voyages on their own account, had been seized, perhaps just as they reached their native land, and made men-of-war's men against their will, as was then the custom.

In England and America we think the

system employed by other nations of compelling men to become soldiers, their lot being decided by a number drawn from an urn, most intolerable ; but the old system of 'pressing' for the navy was far worse. Going to sea was not then looked upon, as now, as an honourable profession, with its compensations and pleasures, and not more difficult and dangerous than many another way in which the poor man has to earn his living. A sea-faring life, owing to the miserable equipment of the ships and the insolence and brutality of the officers, was considered by many a lot to which death was almost preferable. To obtain sailors for merchant-vessels was so difficult that gangs of men were sent out who would overpower and seize any able-bodied man they might find in the streets, carrying him aboard a vessel at night, and keeping him in confinement until away from land, when he would be released and compelled to do his share in managing the vessel. Any attempt at remonstrance would be promptly

quelled by blows and injuries of the severest character.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that among the crew of the 'Wager,' made up as it was in this way, a spirit of insubordination and hatred of authority existed. This will explain many things that happened on this unhappy voyage that would otherwise be hard to believe.

The vessel had always difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the squadron; and meeting with a gale on April 7, was so greatly shattered and disabled that she lost sight of her sister ships altogether, and could obtain no help from them. The place of rendezvous was the island of Socoro; but the weather was too bad to take an observation, as it is called, whereby to judge of her position. There were no charts on board of the neighbourhood whither she had been driven, but an 'abundance of weeds and the flight of certain birds' indicated her approach toward land of some sort.

The gale by this time had reduced the

vessel to a mere wreck, and every endeavour was made to keep her from going ashore. It was difficult enough to set the topsails, since 'it was so extremely dark that the people could not see the length of the ship, and no sooner had it been accomplished than the wind blew them from the yards.'

At four in the morning of the 14th, though she had her head to the west, and was therefore standing off shore, the 'Wager' struck violently on a hidden rock. It helps us to picture the force of waves in a storm to learn that the people on board at first took this concussion for the mere striking of a heavy sea. But the next minute the ship was laid on her beam ends, and the sea made a fair breach in her.

The consequence of this was an almost universal panic. Those who were not drowned in their berths rushed up on deck, and many appeared deprived of reason. One man, armed with a cutlass, struck at everyone about him, and had to be knocked overboard, and another, 'though one of the bravest men on board,'

was so dismayed by the terrible aspect of the breakers that he tried to throw himself over the rails of the quarter-deck. Others abandoned themselves to sullen despair, and were carried to and fro, with every shock of the ship, like inanimate logs.

The man at the wheel, however, kept his station, though both rudder and tiller were gone, and Mr. Jones, the mate, cried out, in order to encourage the crew : ' What, my men, did you never see a ship among breakers before ? Come, lend a hand ; here's a sheet, and here's a brace ; lay hold. We shall bring her near enough land yet to save our lives.' This was the more creditable in him, as he knew what ' breakers ' were, and had a firm conviction in his own mind, as he afterward confessed, that nothing short of a miracle could save them.

But the ship drove on, and contrived to strike just between two large rocks. One of them partially sheltered her from the beating of the sea, which nevertheless threatened every minute to rend her to pieces.



As soon as day dawned, the barge, the cutter, and the yawl were launched, though with the greatest difficulty, and 'so many leaped into the barge that she was greatly overloaded.' The bonds of discipline, it will thus be seen, were already relaxed ; nor must the saying of the captain, that 'he would be the last man to leave the ship,' be set down as very heroic, for Captain Cheap had recently dislocated his shoulder, and would have found getting into a boat a very difficult job indeed. Of all those in authority with whom we have to deal in these scenes of peril and privation, Captain Cheap, of the 'Wager,' was, I think, the most selfish and incompetent. At the same time, as will be seen in the sequel, he had plenty of courage. Even on the present occasion, as Midshipman Byron witnesses, the captain issued his orders 'with as much calmness as ever he had done during the former part of the voyage.'

But only a very few obeyed him. Many of those who had not gone in the boats 'broke open every box and chest they could reach,

stove in the heads of the casks of wine and brandy,' and got so helplessly intoxicated that 'they were drowned on board, and lay floating about the decks for days afterward.'

Those who had reached land in the boats, the number amounting in all to no less than 140 persons, had but little to congratulate themselves upon. Whichever way they looked, horror and desolation presented themselves : on one side the wreck, containing all they had to subsist upon ; on the other, bleak and barren rocks. They found, however, a deserted Indian hut, into which they crowded for shelter from the storm which still raged.

In the morning the pangs of hunger seized them. Most of them had fasted for forty-eight hours, yet only three pounds of biscuit dust had been brought ashore with them, while all the land afforded had been a single sea-gull and a handful of wild celery. These they made into a kind of soup, which, little as it was among so many, caused the most violent sickness and swooning. The biscuit

dust had been put into a tobacco bag which had not been entirely cleaned out, and thus the whole party were very nearly poisoned to death.

The captain and officers had now come on shore, but many of the crew had refused to do so. The storm continuing worse than ever, however, they got frightened, and since the boats could not be got out to them immediately, 'they fired one of the quarter-deck guns at the hut' as a gentle reminder.

The men on land occupied a rocky promontory so exceedingly steep that they were obliged to cut steps to ascend and descend it, which they called—not inaptly—Mount Misery. The knowledge that their comrades were in a state of open mutiny did not tend to raise their spirits. They would have been willing enough, perhaps, to leave them to their fate, but for the necessity of getting provisions.

When at last they were brought to land, they presented an extraordinary appearance. They were armed to the teeth, and only by

the resolution of the officers, who 'held loaded pistols to their breasts,' could they be induced to give up their weapons. They had rifled the chests in the cabins, and put the laced clothes they had found in them over their own greasy raiment, and the boatswain, their ring-leader, was rigged out in the most splendid attire. One is glad to read that, without respect to the figure he made, Captain Cheap felled him to the ground with his cane, and for a few hours order was restored.

As the hut could only hold a few people, the cutter was turned keel upward, and fixed on props, which made a very tolerable habitation. But food was still so scarce, though the scanty provisions from the ship had been hoarded with great frugality, that the men were glad to eat the carrion crows that preyed on the corpses from the wreck, which every tide cast on shore.

The ship was now under water, except the quarter-deck and part of the forecastle, and all that was procurable from it had to be drawn up by large hooks—'an occupation



*'With one blow Captain Cheap felled him to the ground.'*



much obstructed by the bodies floating between-decks.'

It was not until May 25 (eleven days after the shipwreck) that provisions began to be regularly issued from the store tent, which was guarded by the officers night and day. On the 28th, three canoes with Indians came alongside the wreck, and from them they purchased 'a dog or two, and some very fine mussels.'

The language of these men was utterly unintelligible; their clothing was composed of skins and feathers, and they had evidently never seen a white man before. But the castaways contrived to ascertain from them that they were on some island on the coast of Patagonia, about 300 miles north of the Straits of Magellan.

With their privations insubordination increased. Some separated themselves from the rest, and settled a league away; some built a boat, and going up the lagoons about the island, were never heard of more. Worse than all, some in authority misbehaved them-

selves, especially a midshipman named Cozens, who had gained some influence over the men.

Cozens had a dispute with the surgeon ; then he quarrelled with the purser, and was unquestionably of a mutinous disposition. Still it is certain that Captain Cheap exceeded his powers when he drew out a pistol and shot Cozens down. What was worse, he refused permission for the wounded man to be carried into the tent, 'but allowed him to languish for days on the ground, and with no other covering than a bit of canvas thrown over some bushes,' until he died.

Unhappily Captain Cheap distinguished himself in nothing but severity. He never shared the sufferings of his men when he could help it ; and though our narrator, Midshipman Byron, stuck to him to the last, it is plain he thought him a worthless creature.

This loyal young fellow was of good family, and became grandfather of the great Lord Byron, into whose imagination never entered stranger things than actually befell his ancestor.



The midshipman had built a little hut, just big enough to contain himself and a poor Indian dog he found straying in the woods. To this animal in his misery he became much attached. But a party of seamen came and took the dog by force, and killed and ate it. Indeed, three weeks afterward, when matters became much worse, Byron himself, recollecting the spot where the poor animal had been killed, 'was glad to make a meal of the paws and skin which had been thrown aside.'

The straits to which they were by that time reduced sharpened their ingenuity to the utmost. The boatswain's mate, having procured a water puncheon, lashed a log on each side of it, and actually put to sea in it, like the wise men of Gotham in their bowl, and with the assistance of this frail barque he provided himself with wild fowl while the others were starving. Eventually he suffered shipwreck, but was so little discouraged by it that out of an ox's hide and a few hoops he fashioned a canoe 'in which he made several voyages.'

In the mean time the hope of all these poor people lay in the building of a vessel out of the materials of the long-boat, with other timber added. This task was at last accomplished. Captain Cheap's plan was to seize a ship from the enemy, and to join the English squadron ; but the majority of the hundred men, to which number starvation had reduced the castaways, were in favour of seeking a way home through the Straits of Magellan.

About this there arose a quarrel, and eventually the men threw off the captain's authority altogether, left him on the island, and sailed away. A lieutenant of marines, Byron, and a few others remained with him. These were presently joined by some deserters who had settled on another portion of the island, so that their number now amounted to about twenty.

Their only chance of escape was in the barge and yawl, which in the absence of the carpenter were patched up so as to be fit for a fine-weather voyage. Even now their scanty stock of useful articles was diminished by

theft, and two men were flogged by the captain's orders, and one placed on a barren islet void of shelter. Two or three days later, on 'going to the island with some little refreshment, such as their miserable circumstances would admit, and intending to bring him off, they found him stiff and dead.'

All this time the weather was very tempestuous, but the occurrence of one fine day enabled them to hook up three casks of beef from the wreck, 'the bottom of which only remained.' These being equally divided, recruited for the time their lost health and strength.

On December 15, they embarked, twelve in the barge and eight in the yawl, and steered for a cape apparently about fifty miles away. But ere they reached it a heavy gale came on. The men were obliged to sit close together, to windward, in order to receive the seas on their backs, and prevent them from swamping the boats, and they were forced to throw everything overboard, including even the beef, to prevent themselves from sinking.

As it was, the yawl was lost with half its crew.

The survivors, with the occupants of the barge, reached a small and swampy island, where bad weather confined them for days. There they ran along the coast, generally with nothing to eat but sea-tangle. At length they ate their very shoes, 'which were of raw seal-skin.'

It now became evident that the barge could not accommodate the whole party with safety, and as it had become a matter of indifference whether they should take their wretched chance in it, or be left on this inhospitable coast, they separated. 'Four marines were left ashore, to whom arms, ammunition, and some necessaries were given. At parting they stood on the beach and gave three cheers' (what cheers they must have been!) 'for their comrades. A short time afterward they were seen helping one another over a hideous tract of rocks. In all probability they met with a miserable end.'

Finding it impossible to double the cape,

which had been the object of their journey, the rest returned to Mount Misery and Wager Island. Here they found some Indians, the chief of whom, on promise of the barge being given him, promised to guide them to the Spanish settlements.

Upon this voyage their sufferings, notwithstanding what they had already undergone, may be said to have commenced. Mr. Byron at first steered the barge, but one of the men dropping dead from fatigue and exhaustion, he had to take his oar. Just afterward, John Bosman, 'the stoutest among them,' fell from his seat under the thwarts with a cry for food. Captain Cheap had a large piece of boiled seal in his possession, but would not give up one mouthful. Byron having five dried shell-fish in his pocket, put one from time to time into the mouth of the poor creature, who expired as he swallowed the last of them.

Having landed in search of provisions, six of the sailors took an opportunity of deserting in the barge, leaving Captain Cheap, Lieu-

tenant Hamilton, Mr. Byron, Mr. Campbell, and the surgeon—in short, all their surviving officers—behind. The Cacique, as the Indian chief was called, had now no motive to assist them save the hope of possessing Byron's fowling-piece, and of receiving an immense reward should they ever be in a position to pay it. It was with difficulty that they could persuade him to continue his assistance. His wife, however, arrived in a canoe, and in this frail craft, which held but three persons, the chief took the young midshipman and Captain Cheap on a visit to his tribe. After two days' hard labour, in which we may be sure the captain did not share, they landed at night near an Indian village. The Cacique gave the captain shelter, but the poor midshipman was left to shift for himself. He ventured to creep into a wigwam where there was a fire, to dry his rags. In it were two women, 'one young and handsome, the other old and hideous, who had compassion on him, gave him a large fish, and spread over him a piece of blanket made of the down of birds.' The

men of the village, fortunately for him, were absent, and for some time he was well cared for by his two kind hostesses.

Byron's life here was a romance in itself. The occupation of the women being to provide fish, he accompanied them in their canoe with the rest. 'When in about eight or ten fathoms of water, they lay on their oars, and the younger of the women, taking a basket between her teeth, dived to the bottom, where she remained a surprising time. After filling the basket with sea-eggs, she rose to the surface, delivered them to her companion, and taking a short time to recover her breath, dived again and again.'

When the husband of these two women returned, he expressed his dissatisfaction at the kindness they had shown the stranger by taking them in his arms and brutally dashing them against the ground. But notwithstanding this, these good creatures 'still continued to relieve the young midshipman's necessities in secret, and at the hazard of their lives.'

After a while the whole party returned to

Mount Misery, where they found those they had left on the verge of starvation, and in the middle of March they embarked in several canoes for the Spanish settlements. The surgeon now succumbed to his labours at the oar ; Campbell and Byron rowed like galley-slaves, but Hamilton, strange to say, did not know how to row, and Captain Cheap 'was out of the question.' He and the Indians had seal to eat, but the rest only a bitter root to chew ; and as to clothing, Byron's one shirt 'had rotted off bit by bit.'

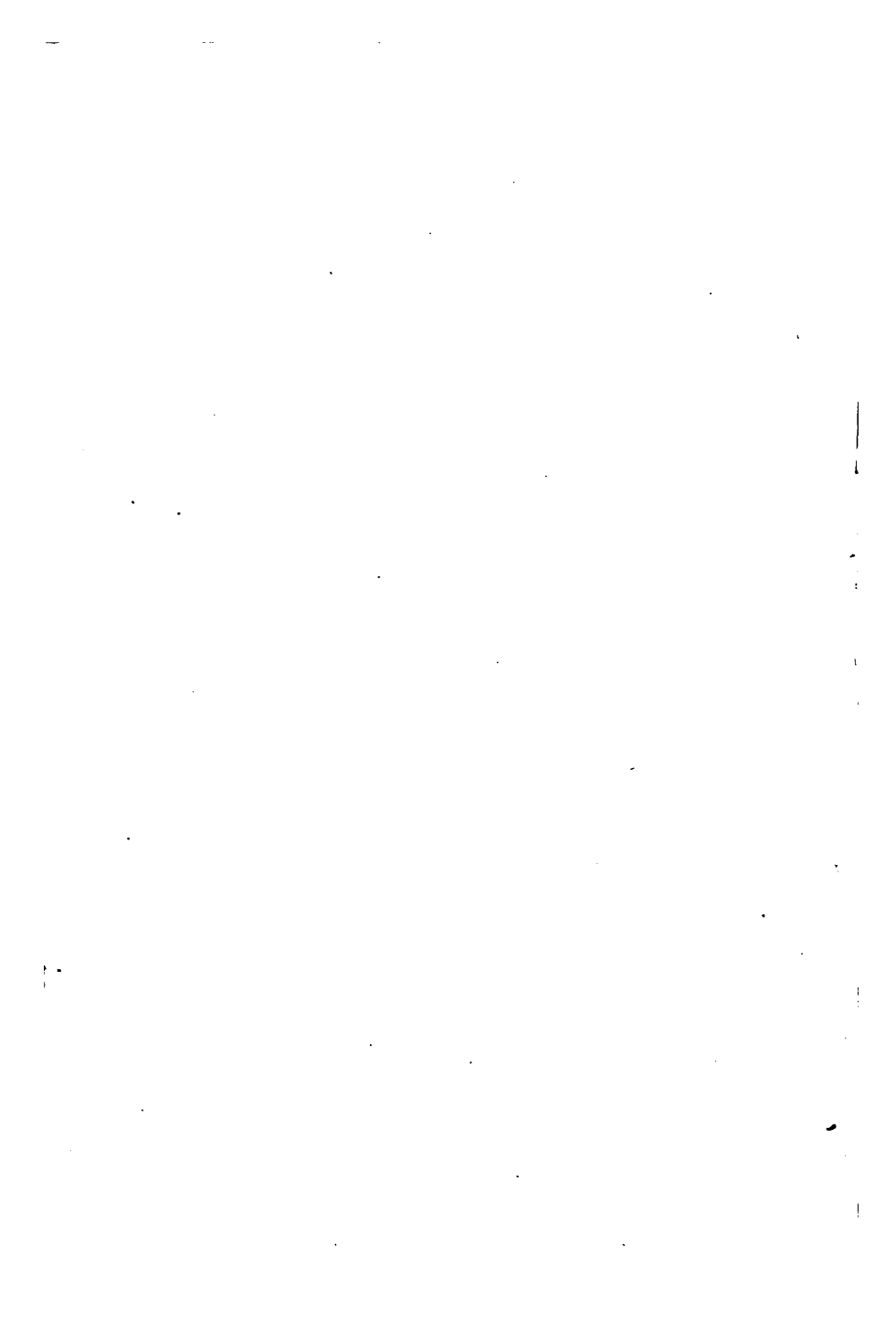
The party landed, and the canoes were taken to pieces. Every one, man and woman, with the usual exception of Cheap, had to take his share of them ; Byron had, besides, to carry for the Captain some putrid seal in canvas. 'The way being through thick woods and quagmires, and stumps of trees in the water which obstructed their progress,' the poor midshipman was left behind exhausted.

After two hours' rest, and feeling that if he did not overtake his companions he was lost indeed, he started after them without his





*Byron carrying the Captain's seal.*



burden. But on coming up with them he was so bitterly reproached by the captain for the loss of his seal and canvas that he actually returned five miles for them. After two days of absence from his companions he again rejoined them, in the last extremity of fatigue, but 'no signs of pleasure were evinced on their part.'

Eventually, after days of terrible suffering, they reached the Spanish settlements at Castro, where, strange to say, they were received with humanity. But as to eating, 'it would seem as if they never felt satisfied, and for months afterward they would fill their pockets at meals in order that they might get up two or three times in the night to cram themselves.' Even Captain Cheap was wont to declare that 'he was quite ashamed of himself,' from which we may certainly infer that their conduct was gluttonous indeed.

The Englishmen, though well fed, received little clothing, and were carried through the country by the Governor of Castro in a sort of triumphal progress. At one place a young

woman, the niece of the parish priest, and bearing the appropriate name of Chloe, fell in love with young Byron. He did not wish for this union, but he confesses that what almost decided him to become her husband was the exhibition by her uncle of a piece of linen, which he was promised should be made up at once into shirts for him if he would consent. 'He had, however, the resolution to withstand the temptation.'

From Castro the English officers were taken to Santiago, the capital of Chili, where a Spanish officer generously cashed their drafts on the English consul at Lisbon. They received the sum of six hundred dollars, with which sum they purchased suitable equipments. They remained at Castro two years on parole, and eventually reached France, and thence escaped to England, after a series of hardships and adventures such as have rarely been equalled, and which were 'protracted about five years.'

The adventures of the eighty men who had left Wager Island in the long boat were

little less terrible. Many perished of starvation, and those who had money or valuables offered unheard-of prices for a little food. 'On Sunday, November 15,' for example, 'flour was valued at twelve shillings a pound, but before night it rose to a guinea.' There was a boy on board, aged twelve years, son of a Lieutenant Capell, who had died on the island. His father had given twenty guineas, a watch, and a silver cross to one of the crew to take care of for the poor boy, who wanted to sell the cross for flour. His guardian told him it would buy clothes for him in the Brazils, whither they were bound. 'Sir,' cried the poor boy, 'I shall never live to see the Brazils ; I am starving. Therefore, for God's sake, give me my silver cross.' But his prayers were vain. 'Those who have not experienced such hardships,' observes the narrator of this scene, 'will wonder how people can be so inhuman. . . . But Hunger is void of compassion.' Of the eighty men only thirty survived to reach England by way of Valparaiso.

*THE TRIALS OF PHILIP AUSTIN.*

It is but seldom, in the melancholy records of shipwreck, that the 'noble savage' maintains the character with which writers of romance have invested him. He is generally cruel, pitiless, greedy of gain, and more to be feared by the helpless mariner than the reef or the storm. There have been, however, one or two exceptions to this general rule, and the British sailor Captain Philip Austin had reason to speak well of the Caribs of Tobago.

In 1756 he sailed from Barbadoes, in a brig of eighty tons, to the Dutch settlement of Surinam. These people were so much in need of horses that at that time no vessel was permitted to trade with them of whose lading horses did not form a part, and, as well may be imagined, they were not the safest kind of

cargo. So rigidly was this strange rule enforced that masters of ships were compelled to preserve the ears and hoofs of horses dying on the passage, and to make oath that they had embarked them alive for the colony.

On the night of the 10th of August, of the year mentioned, when near their journey's end, and while Austin and his mate were keeping watch together, 'sitting on hen-coops,' 'and telling stories to one another in order to while away the time, according to the customs of mariners of all countries,' the broadside of the brig suddenly turned to windward, through the fouling of the tiller, and there being a heavy sea on, she filled at once, so that five out of the nine men who formed her crew 'were drowned in their hammocks without a groan.' The vessel then upset, going completely over, with her masts and sails in the water, the 'horses rolling out above each other, and the whole together exhibiting a most distressing sight.'

The coast was of sand, and the sea comparatively shallow, so that some portions of

the brig were above water. To these the survivors clung, and at once stripped themselves of their clothes, except one who could not swim, and who was, therefore, without hope of saving himself by that means. There was one small boat, twelve feet long, fortunately unsecured by lashings, and this floated out, and was seized upon by the mate, but it was bottom upward.

Austin swam out to him, and the two endeavoured to right her. This, after many efforts, was accomplished, 'the mate contriving to put his feet against the gunwale and to seize the keel with his hands,' while Austin 'tilted her up from the opposite side with his shoulders.' She was still, however, full of water. This was got rid of in a very ingenious manner, for the enormous hat which Austin wore, 'after the fashion of the dwellers in the West Indies,' was useless to bail her. The mast of the brig rose and fell some twenty feet, and the captain fastened a rope to its top, and held on to it from the boat. Whenever the vessel rose, it lifted up him



and the boat, by which three-fourths of the water was emptied ; but 'having no means of disengaging her from the masts and shrouds, they fell down driving him and the boat under the surface, and nearly breaking his thigh.'

Despite his wound, which, however, rendered any further attempt without assistance hopeless, Austin threw himself into the water, and with the rope in his mouth, swam to the men on board the brig, who, by their united strength, hauled the boat over the brig's stern, and emptied it. A hole, however, was knocked in it by this rough treatment, which was repaired by being stuffed with the shirt of the man who could not swim, and had therefore retained that garment. They had no oar, no sail, and except a dog belonging to the captain, 'which was gladly taken in case of necessity,' no provisions.

The brig remained longer above water than might have been expected, for she had casks of flour and butter on board, 'the former of which slowly imbibes water, and

the latter always swims,' but none of these things could be got at. When she sank, the boat being still kept near her, a chest containing clothes and linen, with chocolate and sugar, floated out of her, and for these poor sailors it contained more than the riches of the Indies. It was too large, however, to be lifted into the boat, which, indeed, it would have sunk ; and though they exhausted every means to open it, they found this impossible, and had to let it go. They picked up thirteen floating onions, and that was all.

They had no fresh water ; they were without any kind of implement except a knife, which was in the pocket of the sailor who could not swim, and they calculated that at the very nearest they were one hundred and fifty miles from land. Surely never were human creatures in a worse position.

Not a moment, however, was lost in vain regrets. By patient perseverance they loosened one of the planks with which the boat was lined, and formed it into a kind of mast, which they tied to the foremost thwart.

Another piece of plank served as a yard, and to this they fixed their only pair of trousers for a sail. Two of the men had always to lie along the gunwale with their backs to the waves, which would otherwise have swamped the boat, and, even so, another had constantly to bail it by means of the Dutch hat.

Thus they ran before the wind all night at the rate of about a league an hour. At daylight they ate half an onion each, which 'wonderfully revived them,' but they were tormented with agonies of thirst. Their naked limbs, too, were so scorched with the sun, that from head to foot they were red and blistered as from fire. On the third day the captain killed his dog. He 'afterward reflected on it with regret, but at that time no such sentiment affected him.'

At last the exhausted men gave themselves up to despair, and refused to make any more exertions for their own deliverance, nor would he who had to bail the boat continue to do so, though Austin fell 'on his knees to entreat him.'

On the fifth day an enormous shark followed the boat—an omen the dark meaning of which was only too well known to them ; and this depressed them still further. The dog had long been eaten, and they caught but one flying-fish, which was little indeed among so many. There were several heavy showers, but there was nothing to catch the rain in but the hat and the trousers, which had become so impregnated by salt-water that they were almost useless for that purpose. ‘Their only resource was endeavouring to catch a few drops as they fell into their open mouths to cool the heat of their tongues.’

The two seamen drank sea-water and became delirious, but the captain and mate resisted that temptation ; they each kept a nail in his mouth, and sprinkled his head with water, which afforded but slight relief to their sufferings. On the eighth day the two men died, but in the evening the boat reached land, and the two survivors, ‘forsaking the bodies of their companions, crept out of the boat and crawled on all fours’ along the sand. The

cliffs that walled it they were quite unable to climb up.

At eight in the morning a young Carib discovered them, 'whose eyes, upon beholding their forlorn appearance, filled with tears.' He understood a few French words, and informed them that they were on the island of Tobago. He brought them fresh water, which they drank with passionate eagerness, and cakes of cassava and broiled fish, which they could not swallow.

Other natives showed them similar kindness, removing the two corpses out of the boat 'with signs of the utmost compassion,' and following in all respects the example of the good Samaritan. They brought soup, which seemed to Austin the most delicious food he had ever tasted, but his stomach was in so weak a state that it refused to retain it. Herbs and broth were prepared for him by the women, and his wound was bathed with a lotion made of tobacco. Every morning the men lifted these unfortunates from their hammocks, and carried them in their arms under

the shade of a lemon-tree, while they anointed their blistered skin with a healing oil pressed from the tails of crabs.

In consequence of this friendly care and attention Austin was able in three weeks to go about on crutches, and receive Carib visitors from all parts of the island, 'none of whom came empty handed.' He gave boards with his name cut on them, to be shown to any ship captains who might chance to touch on the island, and after many weeks this plan met with success. A sloop, bound for Martinique, laden with mules, touched at Sandy Point, the western extremity of Tobago, and its master at once sent the intelligence to Messrs. Roscoe & Nyles at Barbadoes, the owners of Captain Austin's barque, who promptly sent a small vessel to fetch him.

When about to depart, the friendly Caribs loaded him with presents of poultry and fruit, especially oranges and lemons, which they thought useful for his recovery. He had absolutely nothing to give them in return, save the boat in which he had arrived, and

which they might have taken without his leave. More than thirty of them accompanied him to the beach, where, at parting from them, 'neither Austin nor the mate could refrain from tears.'

The effects of the poor captain's privations were lasting. His digestion was so impaired that he could hardly speak or walk, and had to give up his calling and return to England. His case excited much public attention. A Bath physician, Dr. Russell, who had resided in the East, and was accustomed to deal with cases arising from long-protracted thirst in the Arabian deserts, came to London to prescribe for him. By means of constant bathing, and asses' milk for his only diet, Austin regained his health in six months, and survived his disaster two-and-twenty years.

*THE WRECK OF THE 'JUNO.'*

OF all the sufferers from shipwrecks, women are the most to be pitied ; for children do not know the full extent of their dangers until death relieves them, while women usually over-estimate it. Their mental agonies are therefore greater than those endured by men, while their physical privations are as great, without the same strength to bear them.

Mrs. Bremner, wife of the captain of the 'Juno,' bound from Rangoon to Madras, had perhaps as terrible an experience of shipwreck as ever fell to the lot of any of her sex. The ship's crew consisted chiefly of Lascars, with a few Europeans, among whom was John Mackay, the second mate, who tells this story.

Soon after the 'Juno' set sail she sprang a leak, which increased more and more on account of the sand ballast choking the

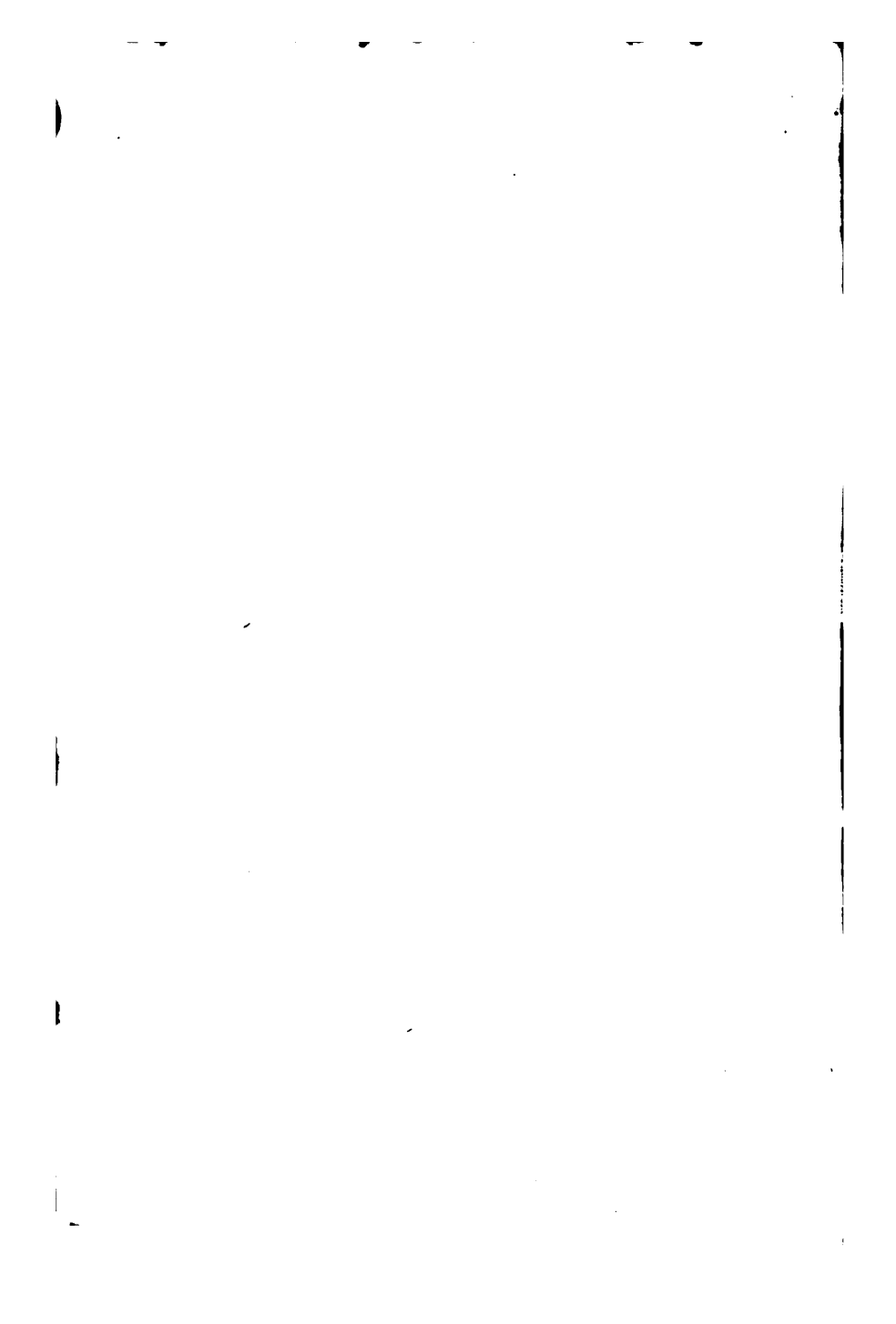


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*'All hands scrambled up the rigging.'*



pumps, until on the twelfth evening she settled down. From the sudden jerk all imagined they were going to the bottom, but she only sank low enough to bring the upper deck just under water.

All hands scrambled up the rigging to escape instant destruction, 'moving gradually upward as each succeeding wave buried the ship still deeper. The captain and his wife, Mr. Wade and myself, with a few others, got into the mizzentop. The rest clung about the mizzen-rigging. Mrs. Bremner complained much of cold, having no covering but a couple of thin under-garments, and as I happened to be better clothed than her husband, I pulled off my jacket and gave it her.'

On the first occurrence of these calamities such unselfishness is not uncommon: it is the continuous privation which tries poor human nature. But it must be said to John Mackay's credit that he behaved most unselfishly throughout, and stood by this poor woman like a man.

The ship rocked so violently that the

people could hardly hold on, and though excessive fatigue brought slumber to some eyes, Mr. Mackay did not snatch a wink. 'I could not,' he says, 'sufficiently compose myself, but listened all night long for a gun, several times imagining I heard one ; and whenever I mentioned this to my companions, each one fancied he heard it too.' It is noteworthy that the same thing happened as to seeing land. When one would imagine that he saw it, the others were persuaded that they saw it too.

The prospect at dawn was frightful : a tremendous gale ; the sea running mountains high ; the upper parts of the hull going to pieces, and the rigging giving way that supported the masts to which seventy-two wretched creatures were clinging.

After three days, during which their numbers were much diminished, the pangs of hunger became intolerable. 'I tried to doze away the hours, and to induce insensibility. The useless complaining of my fellow-sufferers provoked me, and instead of sympathising, I

was angry at being disturbed by them.' He had read of similar scenes, and his dread of what might be was at first more painful than his actual sufferings. Presently, however, he learned by bitter experience that imagination falls short of reality.

For the first three days the weather was cold and cloudy, but on the fourth the wind lowered, and they found themselves exposed to the racking heat of a powerful sun. Mackay's agonies, especially his sufferings from thirst, then became terrible. The only relief from them was afforded by dipping a flannel waistcoat which he wore next his skin from time to time in the sea. He writes, however, that he always 'found a secret satisfaction in every effort I made for the preservation of my life.' On the fifth day the first two persons died of actual starvation, their end being attended by sufferings which had a most sorrowful effect on the survivors.

As the sea was now smooth, an attempt was made to fit out a raft (the boats having been rendered useless), but this being insuffi-

cient to contain the whole crew, the stronger beat off the weaker. Though Mackay succeeded in getting on board, Mrs. Bremner did not, and he asked to be put back again, which was readily done. He resumed his place by her in the mizzentop. Her husband had by this time lost his wits, and would not even answer when addressed. 'At first the sight of his wife's distress seemed to give him pain as having been the cause of her sufferings, and he avoided her ; but now he would barely permit her to quit his arms, so that they were sometimes even obliged to use force to rescue her from his embraces.' His frenzy (as often happens in such cases) took the form of seeing an imaginary feast, and wildly demanding to be helped to this or that dish. On the twelfth day he died, and it was with the utmost difficulty that they threw the body into the sea, after stripping off a portion of his clothing for his wife's use.

There were two boys on board the 'Juno,' who were among the earliest victims. Their fathers were both in the foretop, and heard of

their sons' illness from those below. One of them—it was the thirteenth day of their misery—answered with indifference that he 'could do nothing' for his son. The other hurried down as well as he could, and, watching a favourable moment, scrambled on all fours along the weather gunwale to his child, who was in the mizzen-rigging. 'By that time only three or four planks of the quarter-deck remained, and to them he led the boy, making him fast to the rail to prevent his being washed away. Whenever the lad was seized with a fit of sickness, the father lifted him up and wiped away the foam from his lips, and if a shower came, he made him open his mouth and receive the drops, or gently squeezed them into it from a rag. In this terrible situation both remained five days, until the boy expired. The unfortunate parent, as if unwilling to believe the fact, raised the body, looked wistfully at it, and when he could no longer entertain any doubt, watched it in silence until it was carried off by the sea. Then, wrapping himself in a piece

of canvas, he sank down and rose no more, though he must have lived—as we judged from the quivering of his limbs when a wave broke over him—a few days longer.’ In all the annals of shipwreck I know no more pathetic picture than this.

But for showers of rain all would have been dead long since. They had no means of catching the drops save by spreading out their clothes, which were so wet with salt water that at first it tainted the fresh. Mackay, however, before these timely supplies arrived, had had a very unusual experience. Maddened by the fever which consumed him, and in spite of the ill consequences he expected to happen, he had descended from his place and drank two quarts of sea-water. ‘To my great astonishment, though this relaxed me violently, it revived both my strength and spirits. I got a sound sleep, and my animal heat abated.’ Another expedient for getting some moisture into their mouths was to chew canvas or even lead. Shoes they had none, as leather dressed in India is rendered useless by water, and



Lascars never use any shoes. There were, indeed, some bits of leather about the rigging, but the smell and taste of it were found 'too offensive to be endured.' The rains and fatigue made them very cold at night. In the morning, as the heat increased, 'we exposed first one side and then the other to it, until our limbs became pliant; and as our spirits revived, we indulged in conversation, which sometimes even became cheerful. But as mid-day approached, the scorching rays renewed our torments, and we wondered how we could have wished the rain to cease.'

It must be understood that the ship, though its hull was under water, was moving on all this time. On July 10, being the twentieth day from its partial sinking, one of the people, as has often before happened, cried out, 'Land!' His cry was now heard without emotion, though, 'on raising my head a few minutes afterwards,' says Mackay, 'I saw many eyes turned in the direction indicated.' Mrs. Bremner inquired of him whether he thought it might be the coast of Coromandel,

which seemed to him so ridiculous that he answered that if it was, 'they ought to be exhibited as curiosities in the Long Room at Madras under the pictures of Cornwallis and Meadows.'

It was, however, really the land, though they had small chance of reaching it. Indeed, before evening, the ship, under water as it already was, struck on a rock. The tide having fallen, the remaining beams of the upper deck were left bare, and Mackay and the gunner tried to get Mrs. Bremner down to them, 'but she was too weak to help herself, and we had not strength to carry her.' The Lascars—for the raft had come back with them, as it could make no headway—offered to help if she gave them money. She happened to have thirty rupees about her, which was afterwards of great use, and she did not stint it in helping her preservers. They brought her down for eight rupees, and insisted on being paid on the spot. With that exception, it is pleasant to read that their conduct was excellent throughout, and their behaviour to Mrs. Bremner singularly kind and delicate.

In the gun-room, which they could now reach through a hole in the deck, were found some cocoa-nuts, which one would have expected the finders to retain. On the contrary, they shared them, and insisted only upon keeping the milk in the nuts. This consisted of only a few drops of rancid oil ; nor had the solid part of the cocoa-nuts—a fact to be remembered by those who buy them out of barrows—the least nourishment in it. They found themselves rather worse than better for eating them.

They were past the worst pains of hunger by this time, but the frenzied desire for water still continued. 'Water, fresh water,' says Mackay, 'was what perpetually haunted my imagination ; not a short draught which I could gulp down in a moment—of that I could not endure the thought—but a large bowlful, such as I could hardly hold in my arms. When I thought of victuals, I only longed for such as I could swallow at once without the trouble of chewing.'

Hope now began to animate them, and

though it was the twenty-first day of their sufferings, it is noteworthy that no one died after they first saw land. Towards evening six of the stoutest Lascars, though indeed they were all shadows, tied themselves to spars and reached the shore. They found a stream of fresh water, of which those on board could 'see them drink their fill.' In the morning they beheld these men surrounded by natives, and were all attention to see what sort of treatment they met with. 'The natives immediately kindled a fire, which we rightly concluded was for dressing rice, and then came down to the water's edge, waving handkerchiefs to us as a signal that we should come ashore. To describe our emotions at that moment is impossible.'

But these poor folks could not get on shore, and least of all the poor woman. Boats there were none, and if there had been, there was such a surf between the ship and the land that no boat could live in it. But to remain was certain death. 'I felt myself called upon,' says Mackay, 'to make the

attempt.' With great difficulty he got out a spar and tied it to him with a rope. He then took leave of Mrs. Bremner, who was of course utterly helpless. 'She dismissed me with a thousand good wishes for my safety.' While they were speaking, the spar broke loose, and floated away. He paused one moment, then plunged into the sea. Though he could 'hardly move a joint' before, his limbs immediately became pliant in the water, and the spar helped to sustain him ; but 'being a perfect square, it turned round with every motion of the water, and rolled me under it.' Eventually, however, a tremendous wave carried him to land.

Some natives, speaking in the Moorish tongue—'at which I was overjoyed, for I feared we were beyond the Company's territories, and in those of the King of Ava'—observing his ineffectual efforts to rise, laid hold of him and bore him along. As they passed a little stream he made signs to be set down. 'I immediately fell on my face in the water and began to gulp it down.' His

bearers finally dragged him away lest he should drink too much. They took him to a fire round which the Lascars were sitting, and gave him some boiled rice, 'but after chewing it a little I found I could not swallow it.' One of the natives, seeing his distress, dashed some water in his face, which, washing the rice down almost choked him, but 'caused such an exertion of the muscles that I recovered the power of swallowing. For some time, however, I was obliged to take a mouthful of water with every one of rice. My lips and the inside of my mouth were so cracked with the heat that every motion of my jaws set them a-bleeding and gave me great pain.'

As soon as he was a little recovered, his first care was for Mrs. Bremner, and on pointing out that she had some money about her, the natives were persuaded to take her off the ship. This was accomplished only a few hours before it parted in two. She was totally unable to walk, but her remaining rupees, joined to liberal promises, to be performed on her reaching her journey's end, procured her

a litter in which she was conveyed to Chittagong.

No woman probably ever went through such an experience and survived it as this unhappy lady. Mackay having no money—for Mrs. Bremner had no more to give him—had to walk, and speedily broke down. The natives left him behind without a scruple. He fell in, however, with a party of Mugs, the chief of whom was full of human kindness. He washed Mackay's wounds, which were filled with sand and dirt, supplied him with rice, and endeavoured to teach him how to make fire by rubbing two pieces of bamboo together. Mackay finally arrived at Chittagong, though in a pitiable condition.

In a postscript to this miserable story he says, 'With respect to the fate of my companions in misfortune, Mrs. Bremner, having recovered her health and spirits, was afterwards well married.' So it seems that with time and courage one really does get over almost everything.

*A CASTAWAY AMBASSADOR.*

IN all narratives of ordinary life, and even in fiction, the fact of the persons described being foreigners (i.e., speaking another language), or of the incidents having taken place many years ago, is found greatly to detract from the interest of the story.

This holds good even in accounts of shipwrecks. The perils of a crew of Malays or Chinese would but slightly move us in comparison with those of English or Americans. Nevertheless, there are a few cases, of which the following is one, in which the foreign element, by reason of its strangeness, and also of a certain unfitness to deal with dangers with which our own sailors are familiar, is of itself attractive.

Imagine three Siamese ambassadors, unaccustomed to the sea, accompanied by a



retinue of long-robed attendants, and full of the most artificial and fanciful ideas of human life, suddenly finding themselves thrown upon their own resources, having to climb mountains, swim rivers, deal with savages of the most ignorant type, and devour mussels and sea-weed, contrary to their religion.

It is a picture which would be ridiculous but for 'the pity of it.' Its absurdity is immensely increased by the conviction of the importance of their mission, and of the greatness of the king their master, to whose dispatches (which had probably nothing in them but observations on the weather, or on the state of his own health) they clung with a loyal persistence that could not have been exceeded had they been the original MSS. of the sacred Scriptures.

The name of one of these voyagers is peculiar: Occum Chamnam, a mandarin of Siam, with two other great mandarins, six others of inferior rank, and an immense retinue, embarked on an embassy to the Court of Portugal. They set sail on January 27, 1686,

on board a Portuguese vessel of thirty guns and 150 men, with many passengers besides themselves, 'including three monks of different orders, and a number of Creoles, Indians, Portuguese, and Mestees, a people of colour.' It was what is called in these days rather a 'scratch lot,' which one can easily imagine at any crisis of peril or misfortune would fly asunder from one another like the contents of a burst shell.

When in sight, as they imagined 'by certain marks' (in which they were quite wrong), of the Cape of Good Hope, the huge unwieldy vessel struck on a rock, and stuck there. Occum Chamnam describes the scene in a simple manner, which is quite refreshing. 'I cannot picture the terror and consternation which then prevailed. Who can figure the emotions excited by certain death to so many? Nothing was heard but shrieks, sighs, and groans. People rushed rude'y together.' Ceremonial, which was poor Occum's natural atmosphere, seems to have been neglected altogether. 'Those who had

been the bitterest enemies were now reconciled in all sincerity. The tumult was such that it deafened the crashing of the vessel, breaking into a thousand pieces, and the noise of the waves dashing with incredible fury against the rocks. . . . My own affright was not less than that of others, until, being assured that there was some chance of escape, and *seeing that I personally should not lose much by this shipwreck*, I summoned up some resolution. I had two good habits, which I put on, and then committing myself to several planks tied together, endeavoured to reach the shore. Our second ambassador, the strongest and best swimmer of the three, was already before me, carrying the king's dispatches, fastened to a sabre with which his Majesty had presented him.'

They had neither water, wine, nor bread, and the cold, in spite of his 'two habits,' struck to the very marrow of the poor Eastern. The next morning he accordingly returned to the wreck upon a kind of hurdle, trusting to find food and raiment. Everything how-

ever was full of water, and he could only obtain some pieces of gold stuff, a small case containing six flasks of wine, and a portion of biscuit, 'so bitter from the salt water that I could not swallow a single mouthful.'

As many Siamese had escaped quite naked, Occum shared the gold stuff with them, but 'sensible that the wine would not last long in their hands,' he intrusted it to a Portuguese, 'who had testified great friendship for me, telling him it was at his command, providing he would give me some of it when required. I soon, alas ! had occasion to learn the weakness of friendship when opposed to the impulse of necessity, and that self under the pressure of want is the first consideration. My friend daily supplied me with half a glass of wine for the first few days in the confidence of our discovering a spring or rivulet ; but finding ourselves disappointed, my requests for what I had bestowed in the warmth of friendship were vain.' Indeed the Portuguese gave him so effectual a repulse, saying that 'even his own father should not have a

drop of it,' that the unfortunate ambassador felt that he had exhausted the resources of diplomacy, and did not try again.

I am sorry to say that the conduct of this Portuguese was only an instance of the whole behaviour of his countrymen towards the Siamese. Above two hundred of the ship's company had reached the land—a barren and uninhabitable shore ; and on the second day they started along the coast—just as the crew of the 'Grosvenor' were fated to do a hundred years afterwards—in the expectation of reaching the Cape of Good Hope. The pilots and captain calculated that it was but twenty leagues away, so that 'most of the company left behind what provisions they had obtained from the ship, so as not to be embarrassed by them.'

They soon, therefore, began to feel the pinch of hunger, though it was almost unnoticed in the pangs of thirst. Their road was through bushes which afforded no shelter from the burning sun, and in forty-eight hours they only came upon one well, the waters of

which were so brackish as to be undrinkable. The chief ambassador being in feeble health, the Siamese could not march quickly, and the Portuguese went on ahead, always watched by the former with a touching anxiety, since they had confidence in their skill and endurance, in which they knew themselves to be deficient ; but they soon became secretly aware that the Portuguese did not wish their companionship, and in fact were deserting them.

Presently the first ambassador became so ill that he insisted on being left behind, so that the rest should no longer be delayed, but hasten on to the Dutch settlement, whence help might be sent to him. ' A youth of fifteen, the son of a mandarin, between whom and the ambassador existed a mutual affection, refused to leave him, and this conduct inspired an old domestic, who also remained with his master.'

Once, and even twice, the Siamese came up with the Portuguese, but without either signs of welcome or repulsion ; famine and

fatigue were doing their accustomed work, and nothing but the possession of food or drink had much interest for any one. Their principal support was mussels, and certain bitter leaves which grew above high-water mark. Their signs and dumb entreaties for food, joined doubtless to their strange appearance, were only responded to by the natives 'with shouts of laughter.' When they evinced their desire to purchase some of the sheep and oxen, which were grazing in great numbers throughout the country, they replied 'Tabac' (meaning tobacco), or 'Patafac' (meaning patacas), the only coin they knew. The pilot, indeed, had a few of the latter, and bought an ox with them, but divided it solely among his fellow-countrymen. None of the Siamese obtained a single mouthful.

Occum offered two large diamonds for a sheep, which were refused with disdain; but to one of the mandarins, whose head was adorned with certain gold ornaments, the natives gave a quarter of a sheep in exchange for them, which was eaten raw. A Hottentot once took a fancy

to the gold buttons on an unfortunate diplomatist's robe, and 'I made signs that he should have them in return for something to eat ; but judge of my disappointment when he only brought with him a small vessel of milk'—probably the dearest milk that was ever sold.

The last solid food of which they partook was the skin of the ox purchased by the pilot, and which the Portuguese had thrown away. After that they were so fortunate as to find a peninsula covered with mussels, where they remained two days, as in an oasis of plenty. 'A slender serpent, killed with a dagger, was eaten, head, skin, bones and all ;' and then as they dragged themselves upon their weary way, starvation set in with all its horrors. It was on awaking from a heavy sleep, induced by extreme exhaustion, that the poor Siamese discovered one morning that the Portuguese had finally deserted them. 'In vain we looked around, shouted, and sought everywhere ; not only were we unable to see a single one of them, but could not discover the route they had taken.'



At this terrible crisis—for, left to themselves, these poor Easterns were almost as helpless as children, and were conscious of the fact—the second ambassador called his people round him, and addressed them with a courage and charity such as would have done honour to an apostle of the holiest creed :

‘Faithful Siamese, though all was lost by shipwreck, we had still some consolation. . . . While the Portuguese remained, they were our guides, and in some sort our protection, . . . and I would fain persuade myself that urgent reasons alone can have induced them to leave us. Were not we ourselves constrained to forsake our first ambassador amidst a frightful desert, though with the full design of procuring him aid when it should lie in our power ? The conduct of the Portuguese may not perhaps be less laudable. At all events, it will not avert the evils with which we are menaced to bewail their insincerity and want of faith.’

No Christian sermon, to my mind, ever contained more charity and good sense in it

than this. The latter part of his speech, though it does not recommend itself to our intelligence, is even more characteristic, and breathes a spirit of exalted loyalty which would be chivalrous indeed were the object of it a worthy one. The King of Siam was a potentate, it seems, so sacred, that no one was allowed to mention his name, but in this supreme hour his faithful servant thus ventures to allude to him :

‘Perhaps,’ he says, ‘in requital of the transcendent merits of our great king, Providence will not allow us to remain destitute of succour ; and without further deliberation we ought to follow the coast, according to our previous determination. . . . One thing more. You have witnessed my invariable respect for the dispatches of the king, my master. My first, or rather my sole anxiety during our shipwreck, was for their safety. When encamped on mountains, I have always placed them still higher, and always above the rest of our body, and myself withdrawing lower, guarded them at a respectful distance ; and in the

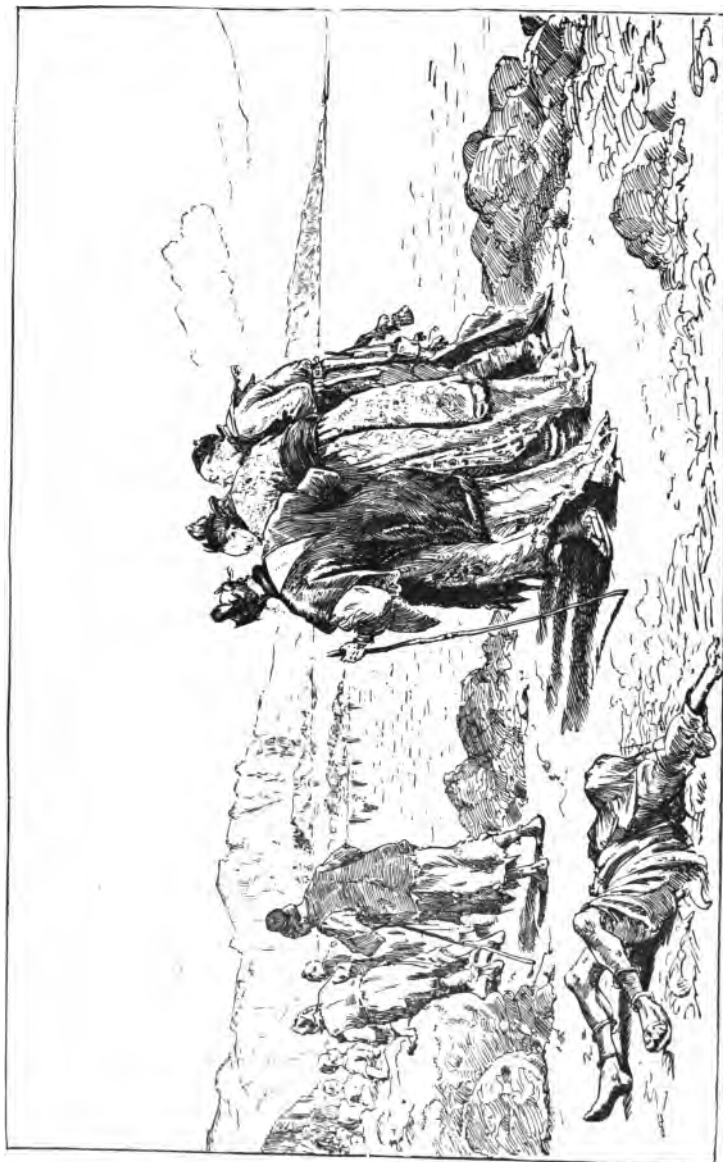
plains, they were affixed to the top of the highest plants I could attain. During this journey they have been borne by myself, and never intrusted to others, until I was unable to drag my limbs along. Now, in our present uncertainty, should I not be able to follow you long, I enjoin the third ambassador [our Occum], in the name of our great king, to act precisely as I have done. . . . But should it be fated that none of us reach the Cape of Good Hope, he to whom they shall be at last intrusted must lay them, if possible, on some eminence, so that they may not be exposed to insult, and then he may die before them, testifying as much respect in death as he was bound to show during life. Such is what I recommend.'

From this date poor Occum Chamnam's miseries became almost intolerable; his whole body began to swell, attended with dreadful pains. 'Without actual experience,' he observes, with touching simplicity, 'I could not have believed in the power of the human frame to resist so long such an accumulation

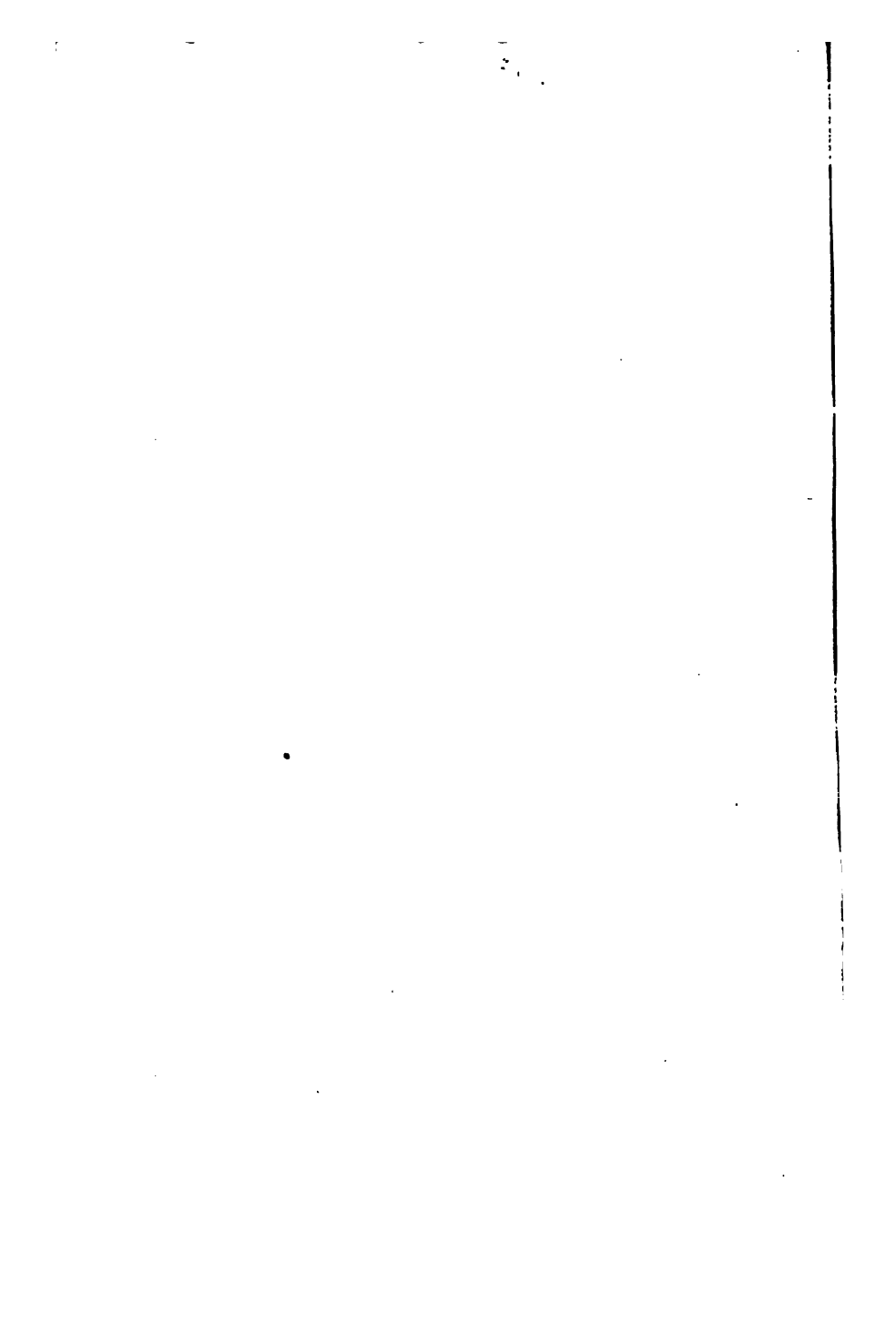
of evils ;' and yet in proportion to their extremity so, strangely enough, did his anxiety to prolong his life increase. All that remained to them of solid hope was in regaining the Portuguese, and when, now and then, they came upon some traces of their course their hearts revived within them. Once they found a pouch of powder, with which they kindled a fire, and Occum broiled his shoes, which had long become useless to him through the swelling of his feet.

'We cut them to pieces, and eat them with great avidity. . . . We tried the same with the cap of one of our attendants, but it was so tough that we had to reduce the pieces almost to a cinder, and then they were so bitter and disgusting that, in spite of our famished condition, our stomachs refused to receive them.' Presently they came upon one of the interpreters lying dead. 'Since his limbs were contracted together, though on a spot abounding with herbs, we judged that he had died of cold.' This sight was not altogether unwelcome, since it showed that they were on

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*'They came upon one of the interpreters lying dead.'*



the right track ; and ' since it was a charming spot, covered with verdure, we halted, and each laid in a stock of palatable leaves.'

This relief, however, was but temporary, and the condition to which they were reduced may be conceived from the fact that, proud as they were by race and nature, they at last resolved to sell themselves to the Hottentots as slaves. ' Surely,' says the unhappy Occum, ' our wretchedness must have been intense, since we were willing to become subject to a people the most abject, vile, and beastly under the sun, and whom we should be reluctant to receive into our homes even in a menial capacity.' Nay, such was their extremity, that they actually resolved to go back to the peninsula where mussels were plentiful, and reached it in three days, with the ardour of exiles seeking some promised land.

Unhappily, though they got their mussels, they could get no firewood to cook them with, while the intense cold at night paralysed all their energies. On the fifth day

they again started on their weary journey, and after terrible privations came on some Hottentots, who had intercourse with the Dutch settlements, and undertook to guide them thither. Many of the poor Siamese had to be left behind, with a store of dried mussels to support them; the rest followed their guides for six terrible days, during which time their chief food was certain large black beetles.

On the thirty-first day after the shipwreck they met with some Dutch settlers, who brought them bread, meat, and wine. 'Our acknowledgments were boundless. We threw ourselves at the knees of our preservers. For my own part, my gratitude was beyond all bounds. When the first ambassador had ordered us to leave him, he gave us some jewels which had been presented by the king our master to be bestowed in presents. I received five large diamonds set in rings of gold, one of which I presented to each of the Dutchmen as an acknowledgment of the renewal of my life.'



What seems very strange, the survivors of the Portuguese party, who arrived at the settlement eight days before them, seem to have suffered even worse privations than the Siamese. A monk of St. Augustine, who was of the party, drew tears from Occum's eyes by the recital of them. 'We should have been as relentless as tigers,' he says, 'not to have melted at the cries and groans of those who had dropped by the way, overcome by the torments of hunger, thirst, and fatigue. They implored our assistance ; they conjured us to procure a drop of water. Every one seemed insensible to their sufferings, and to avoid the semblance of cruelty, when we saw them fall, which happened frequently, we exhorted them to recommend their souls to God, and then, without further remark, turned away, stopping our ears that we might hear the groans of the dying no longer.'

One incident in that terrible journey stands out above all others, and seems to have affected all witnesses, however wretched in their own circumstances, with its horror and

pathos. The captain of the ship, a man of high rank and station, had carried out his only son with him to India, that he might make an early acquaintance with life at sea. He watched over the boy's safety during the shipwreck, and, since his strength soon failed him, caused him to be carried during the march by his slaves. But when these grew too weak to bear him, the youth was reduced to such a state of feebleness that he lay down to die.

‘His limbs were stiff and swollen, and he lay stretched at all his length unable to bend a joint. The unfortunate captain was driven to despair. Lifting the poor lad on his shoulders, he tried to carry him, but could make but a single step, when he fell to the ground with his son, who seemed more distressed at the other's grief than at his own sufferings. He entreated the others, in the most impressive manner, to carry his father away with them, whose presence only augmented his miseries. The priests endeavoured in vain to represent to the captain the sinfulness of thus

endangering his own life by useless delay, and at length he was removed by force.' The violence of his grief, however, continued without abatement, and though he reached the settlement, he died of a broken heart on the second day.

Occum Chamnam himself lived to return to Siam, and behold the gracious countenance of the sovereign whom nobody was allowed to name; and, what is very creditable to him after such an experience, he actually tempted the sea again as ambassador to the Court of France.

*THE BURNING OF THE 'NEW HORN.'*

WILLIAM BONTEKOE, a Dutchman, who sailed from the Texel as captain of the 'New Horn' in the winter of 1618, has left behind him an interesting record of the fate of that unhappy ship. The catastrophe which destroyed it was all the more terrible as up to that point the voyage had been a singularly fortunate one.

The crew had suffered from sickness, it is true, but they found on the island of Mascarenhas, in the neighbourhood of Madagascar, a natural health resort of quite a surprising kind. No sooner had they landed than such as were able 'rolled themselves on the grass,' from which alone they seemed to receive an immediate benefit. The blue pigeons overhead were so tame that they were taken by the hand, and two hundred of them killed and

roasted the first day, which to the seamen who had been so long used to salt meat was a banquet beyond expression. Other birds had only to be caught, and their cries brought whole flocks within easy reach. Turtle were so plentiful that as many as twenty-five were found under a single tree. They filled their casks at a fresh-water river, 'with banks covered with trees in regular order, presenting such a beautiful view that nothing in the world could be more delightful.'

This 'summer isle of Eden' was uninhabited save by the gentlest and most nourishing creatures, and even from the palm-trees there flowed a mild and nourishing liquid. The water round the island was so crystal clear that through seven and even eight fathoms they could distinctly see the bottom. All the sick were cured here in a very short time, and returned on board not without great unwillingness.

At St. Mary's Isle, a few days' sail from this, they met with some pleasant savages, who, understanding nothing of their language;

'imitated the cries of cattle, sheep, and poultry, to inform them that such supplies were at their disposal. They brought them milk in baskets made of leaves so closely interwoven that it was drawn off by a hole pierced through. Among the crew was a man who played the violin, and who put these simple people fairly beside themselves with the delights of his music.'

The crew of the 'New Horn' had altogether a very pleasant voyage, until one evening, in the latitude of the Straits of Sunda, the dreadful cry of 'Fire!' was raised. The steward had gone below-decks with a candle to fill his keg with brandy, 'that a small glass might be served out to each person in the morning, according to the Dutch fashion,' and a spark from the wick had fallen into the bunghole. The flames blew out the ends of the cask, and set fire to some coal underneath it, the smoke from which was unendurable. Upon this the captain ordered the powder to be thrown overboard, to which the supercargo, who was answerable to the owner of the ship,

'would not consent.' The launch and cutter were lowered to clear the decks, and into these many of the crew quietly slipped by the chain-wale, or swam to them, having dropped into the sea. Presently, while the poor captain was battling with the smoke and flame, one of the sailors runs up to him, and exclaims, 'Dear Captain, what are we to do now? the launch and cutter have deserted us.' Which indeed they had. For the moment he was transported with rage, and hoisted all sail in hopes of running them down, which, in truth they richly deserved; 'but within about three ships' lengths they got the weather-gauge, and escaped.'

What a dramatic scene! The burning ship, with its tenants, within a few minutes of horrible death, yet filled with the desire of revenge, and the miserable deserters, full of shame and fear, only escaping them by a hair's-breadth. Yet a few weeks before these people had been the best of friends, and fancied themselves in Paradise.

Though little hope was left—for the oil

with which the ship was laden had taken fire—the crew now betook themselves, too late, to casting out the powder. ‘Sixty barrels had been got overboard, but three hundred still remained. The fire at length reached them, and the vessel blew up in the air with one hundred and nineteen souls. A moment afterward not a human being was to be seen. ‘And believing myself to be launched into eternity,’ writes Bontekoe, ‘I cried, “Lord, have mercy upon my soul!”’

On reaching the water, like a spent rocket, he ‘fetches a little breath,’ and perceiving the mainmast floating near him amid the other débris of the wreck, contrives to gain it. At the same moment he sees a young man rising from the water, who exclaims, ‘I have got it!’ (meaning a spare yard). ‘My God!’ cried I to myself, ‘is it possible that any one can have survived?’

With two wounds on his head, and bruises all over his back, he could do little to help another, but what lay in his power he did do. While seated with his co-survivor on the mast.





*The fire reaches the powder.*



the sun, the great hope-giver to all in calamity, 'went down, to our great affliction,' leaving them destitute as it seemed of any chance of succour. When morning dawned, however, they found both launch and cutter beside them, 'and I cried out to my people to save their captain,' which they were very willing to do, though in great amazement at finding him in life. But being quite unable to move, a rope was tied round him, and he was dragged on board, and deposited in a hole in the stern, 'which,' says poor Bontekoe, he thought 'convenient' to die in.

A few hours ago meat and cheese had been floating in such quantities about their legs that it had been difficult to get rid of them, but all that these stupid sailors had managed to pick up were seven pounds of biscuits. Without their captain they were indeed without their head. Their strength was exhausted with rowing, and when he murmured 'sail,' they stared at him. 'Where,' they asked, 'were they to get sails from?' Then he told them to take their shirts, and to use all the cordage

about the boat for thread ; ' but when I offered mine, they refused it, as necessary to my feeble health.' A dressing-gown and pillow were also supplied him, and the surgeon applied chewed bread, ' for want of a better remedy,' to his wounds.

There were forty-six persons in the launch, and thirty-six in the cutter. This ingenious invalid captain of theirs engraved a chart of the Straits (of Sunda) on a plank, by which they steered, and also ' constructed a compass.' Each had a biscuit of the size of a man's finger daily, but nothing, amid the scorching heat of the day, to drink. Presently it rained, however, and they filled a cask, out of which they drank from a shoe. ' They all invited me to drink as much as I liked, but I restricted myself to the same allowance as the rest.'

As the launch sailed more quickly than the cutter, the people in the latter besought to join their fellows, and their entreaties were complied with. There were thus eighty-two souls crowded together on the launch, ' a deck being made of the oars where some could sit,

while the others crouched below.' Then, as their miseries increased, and starvation set in, they began to murmur at their leader, whose only fault was the endeavour to inspire them with hope. The rage of hunger urging them beyond all bounds, they announced their intention to kill and eat the boys on board ; and it was with the utmost difficulty that Bontekoe persuaded them to give them a respite of three days. If they did not sight land within that time, the boys were to be sacrificed.

Bontekoe had some confidence in his scientific calculations, but chiefly in his prayers, that the Almighty would preserve them from a crime so horrible. No one could stand upright, through excessive weakness, but the captain crawled from one end of the boat to the other encouraging his men. On the third morning the quartermaster suddenly cried out, 'Land ! land !'

This land was inhabited by a barbarous people by whom many of them were killed, but the survivors escaped in their boat, and once more put to sea. In the end, as indeed

throughout, they owed their safety to the intelligence of their captain, for looking around him in all directions he discovered 'two great blue hills,' and calling to mind that he had heard from an experienced navigator that on the extreme point of Java there were two hills of this description, he steered for them, and found a haven and European help.

It is pleasant to learn from other sources that this intrepid fellow arrived in safety at his native town, 'where he led an exemplary life, and died in the esteem and admiration of all who knew him.'

*IN SIGHT OF HOME.*

ONE of the most striking 'personal preservations' ever recorded took place on the familiar coast between Dartmouth and Torbay, and it did not happen to a 'bold smuggler,' as it ought to have done, but quite the contrary, that is to say, a coast-guardsman. He was first lieutenant of the 'Dart,' the revenue cruiser on that station, and on news being brought him one evening of a projected 'run,' as the smuggling traffic was called, it was the second lieutenant's duty to go with an armed galley to prevent it.

'As my brother officer, however, was going ashore that night,' he says, 'I took his place.' The lieutenant started with six sailors and a marine. Their oars were muffled, and they soon lost sight of the 'Dart.' 'The lights of the near and overhanging houses

shone for a minute or two between her masts and yards ; then the lofty black land and the glittering lights of the elevated town, never to be beheld again by most of us.'

It was the 1st of March ; the night was cold and showery, and as they pulled toward 'Berry Head' a heavy ground-swell seemed to foretell a gale. In rounding the Head they shipped several seas, which made them chill and cheerless enough. At half past one, on reaching the entrance of the sound that separates the Mewstone from the mainland, the lieutenant determined to pass through it, ordering the bow man 'to keep a very careful look-out, and of course very careful myself.' In this manner they had half threaded the dangerous passage, the 'Ay, ay, sir,' of the man at the bow repeatedly replying to the lieutenant's directions to 'look out,' when, to their great surprise, the boat struck on something forward.

'There's a rock under the bow, sir. Back off all—all.'

Before the men could do so, however, the



retiring swell left the galley suspended, 'and being of that class justly called "Deaths," she almost instantly fell on her broadside.' While the words, 'Throw the ballast bags overboard!' were passing the lieutenant's lips she sank under him. 'For a second or two the men forward appeared high and dry out of water ; then she slipped off the rock, disappeared, and not a splinter of her was ever seen again.'

The lieutenant could swim better than most men, and had great confidence in his powers, but benumbed as he was with cold, on an ironbound coast, and with such a sea, 'it appeared little short of a miracle that could save me.'

As to saving others, 'all such thoughts were quite out of the question.' His first object, indeed, was to escape the grasp of his drowning crew, more particularly of the poor marine close behind him, 'whom I had seen comfortably settled, and apparently fast asleep, a few seconds ago.' He accordingly seized the strokesman's oar, as it floated past him,

‘and giving myself what little impetus my sinking footing would admit of,’ he struck out in the opposite direction to the rock, which he foresaw the rest would make for.

After a few strokes he looked behind, and this is what he saw—and heard: ‘The galley was gone ! But as I rode on the crest of the wave, the sparkling of the sea beneath me and the wild shrieks that rose from the watery hollow, too plainly pointed out the fatal spot where the poor fellows were sinking in each other’s embrace. For a few seconds a sea arose and hid the place from my view ; and on again getting a glimpse of it the sparkling of the water was scarcely discernible, and a faint murmur only crept along the surface of the waves. Another sea followed. As it rose between me and heaven I saw on its black outline a hand clutching at the clouds above it. A faint gurgle followed, the sea rolled sullenly by, and all was dark and silent around me.’ A sight, as our lieutenant truly observes, which many must have witnessed; but few have lived to describe.

As for himself, his case seemed desperate enough, for if he should reach the shore the surf would dash him to pieces, and even if he should land, the cliffs were so steep that it would only be to die a more lingering death.

The lieutenant, however, was one of those men who 'never say die,' and clutch hope by its last skirt. He had a suit of heavy 'Flushings' over his jacket and trousers, and a large boat cloak, which, however comfortable for sitting in, were much too clumsy to swim in. By help of his supporting oar he got rid of his cloak and his two jackets, but he did not dare attempt to rid himself of the two pair of trousers, lest they should cling round his ankles and hamper his movements; nor did he cast off his shoes, since he reflected they would save his feet from being cut against the rocks.

The coolness and common-sense of this gentleman, considering the circumstances in which he found himself, were such, in short, as it would be difficult to surpass. Thus lightened, and 'with the oar held fore-and-aft

wise under my left arm, I struck out boldly for the shore, and having been, Heaven only knows how long in the water—to me it seemed an age—I got into the wash of the breakers, and after receiving several blows I secured a footing, and scrambled up above the break of the waves.'

Here one would think his story ought to have ended, but as a matter of fact the poor lieutenant was now as badly off as ever.

'As I lay panting, breathless, and nearly insensible, the words "Save me, save me ; I am sinking," appeared to rise with the spray that flew over me.' At first he thought it was fancy, but on hearing the cry repeated he roused himself, and beheld a man struggling to reach the shore. 'Never shall I forget the sensation of that moment ; I could not stir a finger to save him. At this crisis the oar that had saved my own life floated within reach of his hand.' He saw it, grasped it, lost it, was swept away, and again returned, and eventually clung to the shore. Presently he rose, scrambled up slowly to his com-

mander's side, embraced him, and murmured, 'They are all drowned, sir.'

It must have been a most pathetic meeting.

After a time they recovered themselves a little, and by means of stamping and swinging their arms persuaded the blood to flow through their chilled veins. Then they strove to climb the cliff. By helping each other they attained some thirty feet, when suddenly the lieutenant found himself on the edge of a precipice. A chasm yawned beneath him, through which the sea was dashing violently. 'We were not on the mainland, but only on a rock !'

It is impossible to exaggerate the distress of mind of the two castaways at this discovery. Even the lieutenant, who was by far more vigorous and hopeful than his companion, was utterly cast down by it. He remained upon the edge of the precipice, just to make sure that there was no hope of escape save through that foaming channel with the steep rocks beyond it 'and then descended to the nearest ledge in deep despondency.'

His shirt 'clung with icy coldness' to his body, and his shivering frame warned him of his fast-failing strength. Though to attempt to cross the chasm was almost certain death, he preferred that risk to perishing by inches. His companion, on the other hand, the type of quite another class, shrank from the more immediate peril, talked 'of the consolation of dying together,' and clinging to the lieutenant besought him in the most moving terms not to leave him. In order to escape his grasp our lieutenant had to feign to look for a more sheltered place, and then descended to the edge of the channel.

'The distance was not very great, but the water was one sheet of foam, edged by the long black sea-weed that adhered to the rocks, except where a heavy black sea rolled through the passage, drove the one before it, and flowed over the other. An apparently perpendicular cliff hung over the whole.' It was hard to imagine a more terrible and hopeless position; nevertheless, reflecting that not only his own life but that of his wretched

companion depended upon his making the venture, our lieutenant, watching 'a smooth' (i.e., when the foam was less furious), and committing his spirit to God, plunged into the gulf. A few strokes brought him to the other side, but it afforded no footing, and save for the sea-weed, no hold. 'Again and again did I seize the pendent slippery weeds, and as often did the drawback of the sea, assisted by my own dead weight, drag me with a giant's force, and rolling down the face of the rock, I sank several feet under water.'

It was no wonder if this time, with the sea whizzing in his ears and rattling in his throat, he thought that his last moment had arrived. He rose, however, once more to the surface, dug his nails into the rock, clung to the sea-weed with his teeth, and was torn from his hold by a tremendous sea, which cast him up many feet. In descending, he caught a projecting point above the weeds, 'and at the same instant my leg was thrown over another; the sea left me, and, gasping for life, I hung over the abyss once more. Suc-

cessive seas followed, but only lashed the rocks beneath me, as if enraged at having lost their prey. . . The dread of being forced away caused me to make an almost super-human effort. I gained a footing, climbed upward till even the spray fell short of me. God be praised, I was safe !'

Having ascended some forty feet, he stopped to take breath, and between the roar of the breakers distinctly heard the frantic shrieks of his companion imploring him for the love of God not to leave him. In vain the lieutenant endeavoured to comfort him by the assurance that if he succeeded in reaching the cliff-top he would send him help. He could not make himself heard, and indeed needed all his breath for what lay before him.

He now began to ascend the almost perpendicular face of the cliff, 'now with tolerable ease, now hanging with scarce a foothold over the pitch-black ocean,' until the cries of the man were lost, and the roar of the ocean itself was but faintly heard. Suddenly he 'beheld the heavens all around him, and



fell rapidly, head-foremost,' he knew not where.

He thought he had fallen into the sea, but he had really toppled over the cliff on the landward side, a fall of only a few feet, but which had been sufficient under the circumstances to deprive the poor lieutenant of his senses. When they returned to him he found himself in a furze-bush, almost frozen to death. Unable to move his limbs, he contrived to roll out of it, which caused his blood to circulate, and made him conscious of that intense pain which 'none but those who have been frost-bitten can have any idea of.' At length, however, he felt the prickles left by the furze-bush, and 'could with truth affirm that that was the happiest moment of my life.'

He presently came upon the track of cart-wheels, and, after a narrow escape from being shot as a burglar, made his way to a farmhouse, where every attention was paid to him. Men were despatched to the cliffs to exhibit lights all night to keep up his companion's

spirits. In the morning a boat was despatched, when he was found half dead. After three days' nursing, however, he recovered.

Only one relic of the ill-fated boat was ever discovered—its mast, floating *on end*, with a corpse tied by the hand to it! Such a night's adventure as that which fell to the lot of our brave lieutenant has probably few parallels, and I think it will be agreed that as a narrator of such matters he is without a rival.

*ARCTIC TRAVEL.*

## I.

IN modern days it is thought to be no very great undertaking to spend a winter in the arctic regions ; but in earlier times this was not so ; every one shrank from the dreadful climate even in summer, and feared the terrors of the sunless land. It is true that in old times we did not possess all the advantages afforded by modern science to those who undertake arctic travel, but still it seems strange that the prospect of such an undertaking should have been regarded with such terror.

Certain Muscovy merchants, we read, actually obtained a pardon for some malefactors condemned to death, on condition that they should remain a year in Greenland, where 'all necessities of clothes and provisions were to

be provided, and ample payment made for accomplishing the task.' The terms were accepted, and the convicts embarked; 'but on viewing the place of their banishment they rejected the offer; they preferred death to living there.'

In 1630, however, the feat was accomplished, against the will of him who did it, under far less favourable conditions. Captain Goodler, of the 'Salutation,' one of the vessels engaged in the whale fishery, left the Foreland for Green Harbour, in order to take in twenty men who had been transferred to one of the other vessels. Finding himself near a part of the coast famous for the abundance of its venison, he sent eight men ashore in a boat to hunt. This was on August 15. They carried with them a couple of dogs, a matchlock, two lances, and a tinder-box, and were so fortunate as to kill no less than fourteen deer that very day.

As they were extremely tired, they resolved to rest on shore that night, and return to their ship the next day. But the weather

being hazy, and much ice arising between the sea and the land, the vessel was forced to stand out to sea, and they lost sight of her. 'Under these circumstances they decided to hunt along the shore to Green Harbour, where she was to pick up the twenty men. They killed eight deer more, and, with their boat well laden with provisions, arrived at the place to find that the men had been picked up already, and that their ship had departed.'

The time for leaving Greenland being August 20, they lost not a moment in pushing into Bell Sound, the place of general rendezvous, some fifty miles away. But though they threw their venison overboard, they made but slow progress, and 'being without a compass, and uncertain of the navigation, they reached the place too late. The fleet, having a fair wind, had sailed away.'

Their disappointment was very great, and the misery of being entirely deserted was increased by the conviction that they must winter in a cold, inhospitable, and desolate

region, without anything wherewith to make themselves comfortable.

If they had been mere sailors taken at random, instead of picked men accustomed to hunting, all would have been over with them. As Dr. Rae, the arctic explorer, once pointed out to me, this is the real secret of life or death in these regions. In his own marvellous expedition he had the Hudson's Bay Company's men with him, who do not waste powder.

These eight poor fellows, however, were not sensible of the advantage they possessed in this respect; or, at all events, it comforted them but little. They only remembered stories of desertion, and how nine of their fellow-countrymen had been abandoned at that very place and had come to a miserable end, their bodies having been found the next spring, 'miserably disfigured by beasts of prey.'

They took counsel, and resolved to winter at Bell Sound, where a hut had been built by the Dutch for the whalers. It was, however, eighty feet long and fifty broad, so that it was

necessary to build a much smaller compartment within it for themselves. They were thus, it will be observed, well provided with firewood—an immense advantage in those regions.

Even provisions were not wanting, though at first fresh meat was so scarce that they confined themselves to one meal a day. On Wednesdays and Fridays they had only whale fritters—scraps of fat thrown away after the oil had been extracted. They mended their clothes, which were worn out, as well as they could with threads of rope-yarn and needles of whalebone.

On October 14, the sun sank to rise no more for months, and their spirits sank with it. Nevertheless 'the moon was in view all this time both night and day, shining for the most part as it does during bright weather in England. When it was obscured they used an oil lamp with wicks made from rope-yarn.'

As the new year commenced the cold grew more intense; 'blisters would rise on the poor fellows' flesh as though they had been

burned with fire, and iron stuck to their fingers like bird-lime.' At first they procured fresh water from a spring beneath a cliff and under thick ice ; but from January 10 until May 20 they had to melt the snow for it with hot irons.

During February no less than forty bears visited the hut, of which seven were killed, and they trapped fifty foxes. On May 24, the first deer was seen, but their only remaining dog had grown so fat and lazy that it refused to hunt. On the next day, 'being all but one, Thomas Ayers, collected together for prayers in the smaller hut, they suddenly heard voices calling "Hey!" to which, not without surprise (as one can imagine), Ayers answered, after the custom of seamen, "Ho!"'

Their visitors were from two Hull steamers just arrived at Bell Sound, and much astonished they were at the sight of the eight men 'in rags and blackened with smoke.' On the other hand, they were 'well entertained with venison, roasted four months ago, and a cup of water, which on account of the novelty



they accepted.' The Greenland fleet arrived two days afterward, with Captain Goodler himself, who spared nothing to promote the comfort of the castaways.

What strikes us here is the good fortune these men enjoyed in losing none of their number ; but it must be remembered that they had a roof over their heads, and firewood, and above all could provide themselves with provisions. The general experience of those who have been in like condition has been very different.

## II.

Only four years afterwards the Dutch Government offered inducements to any party of Greenland whale-fishers who would winter on the island of St. Maurice, commonly called Mayer's Island, from John Mayer, its discoverer. It lies between seventy-one and seventy-two degrees of north latitude (whereas that of the little English settlement above described was sixty-seven degrees), but is barren, mountainous, and inhospitable enough.

Seven Dutch sailors volunteered for this adventure, and were left behind by the fleet, accordingly, on August 26. At that time 'the heat of the sun was so powerful that they pulled off their shirts, and sported on a hill near their abode.' There was an abundance of seagulls, and a few vegetables—or at least something that served for salad—grew in the vicinity.

They did not resort to fires until October 9. As the winter advanced, however, their privations set in with unaccustomed severity. At the end of the old year they 'went to prayers, wishing each other a happy new year and good success in their enterprise.' This is the last glimpse of cheerfulness we get among them.

January was dark and stormy: bears were scarce, and the poor fellows had little skill in killing them. In March many of them were attacked by that arctic scourge, scurvy, caused by the absence of fresh provisions. On April 3, only two were in health, and the rest extremely ill. On that day the last two of the

pullets that had been left them were killed. The 'clerk' (i.e., I suppose, the purser) died on the 16th, whereupon the rest implored Heaven to have mercy upon his soul and on themselves.

They were, indeed, in sad straits by that time. On the 23rd, one writes in his journal—and the journal is all the record we have of their doings, for they all perished: 'We are by this time reduced to a deplorable state, none of my comrades being able to help himself, much less another; the whole burden, therefore, lies on my shoulders, and I shall perform my duty as well as I am able so long as it pleases God to give me strength. I am just now about to assist our commander out of his cabin; he thinks it will relieve his pain, for he is struggling with death. The night is dark, and the wind is blowing from the south.'

What a miserable utterance of human misery is this! How difficult it is, as one reads it, to reflect that all this happened two centuries and a half ago! One seems to hear the moans of those solitary, sick men even

now. On April 27, we read, they killed their dog. As there is no further note of what took place, it is supposed they must have all died in the beginning of May.

On June 4, the Dutch landed to seek for their comrades, and 'presaged ill from their not having come down to the shore to welcome them.' They found them all dead men. 'Near one of the bodies stood some bread and cheese; a box of ointment, with which he was wont to rub his teeth and joints, beside another, *whose arm was extended* toward his mouth; a prayer-book was near a third. Each of the men was found in his own cabin.' The commander of the fleet caused the bodies to be put in coffins, 'and interred, on St. John's Day, under a general discharge of cannon.'

### III.

The narratives of Dr. Kane and still more recent explorers have made 'the land of snow and ice' familiar to all readers. The conditions of life there are indeed so different from

what they are elsewhere that the subject has a constant attraction. But in telling these stories of 'Peril and Privation' I have purposely chosen such experiences as are not so universally known.

In 1706 a very terrible adventure happened to certain sailors 'surrounded by islands of ice' off Newfoundland. Their ship struck on an ice-field, and although they 'hung cables, coils of ropes, hoops, and such things over the ship to defend her,' she struck so hard that eventually she bilged, and could 'scarcely be kept afloat until daylight by two pumps going, and bailing at three hatchways.' Some thought that taking to the boats was preferable to such a position; but it was the captain's opinion 'that though God could work wonders, it was impossible that so small a boat could preserve us, and that it would be but living a few days longer in misery.' So he resolved to take his chance and die with his men.

Nevertheless, 'being importuned,' he ordered the boat out with the narrator and six

men ; and that the others might not suspect their design, and swamp it by numbers, 'it was given out that the boat should go ahead to tow the ship.' How likely such a thing was the reader may judge, there being but one oar, 'all the others having been broken in defending the ship against the ice.' Failing in this attempt, the boat fell astern, and the captain (thinking better of the matter), with others, attempted to get out of the cabin windows to join her. But this being discovered by the men, 'they took small-arms, and kept off the boat,' resolving, as she could not preserve all, that the whole party should perish together.

'We were now eight in number, and, willing to save our captain, lay hovering about the ship till night, and having gone among the shattered ice, made fast our boat to a small lump, and drove with it ; and, as we came up with great ice, removed and made fast to another piece, and so continued during the night.' In the morning they found themselves three leagues from the ship, and after

consultation the boat's crew decided to make no more attempts at rescue, if rescue it could be called. 'But I, considering how little it would tend to my honour to save my life and let my captain perish, . . . desired them to row up to that part of the ice next the ship, whence I should walk to her, and die with my commander. . . . But when we reached it I was loth to go.' The captain, however, perceiving how matters stood, ran out to them, followed by such a multitude 'as was like to have spoiled all,' and in the end they got off with him, 'with twenty-one people in the boat and hanging to the sides,' thus taking a miserable farewell of their distressed brethren, though 'the heart of every one was so overladen with his own misery as to have little room to pity another.'

Their only provision was a small barrel of flour and a six-gallon runlet of brandy; but they had an old chest, which they split up and nailed to certain handspikes in lieu of oars, while a piece of tarpaulin served for their mainsail. By these means they got into the

open sea, but only again to be surrounded by many great ice islands, 'which drove so fast together that we were forced to haul up our boat on them or we should have perished.' Then they lay eleven days without once seeing the sea. Seals were fortunately caught in great abundance. 'Our fire hearth was made of their skins, and the fat melted so easily that we could boil the lean with it.'

The intense cold, however, soon began to affect their feet, and when they touched one another, as they were often compelled to do, 'hideous cries arose' from the pain. They were released and re-inclosed by the ice islands no less than five times, 'the last being worse than any before, being so thick that we could not force the boat through, yet not solid enough to bear the weight of a man.' Moreover, though they saw seals, they could no longer take them.

Nevertheless, with good management, and drinking the ice mixed with brandy, their provisions held out, though indeed in sombre fashion, 'it pleasing God to save some of us



by taking others to Himself.' They died two or three a day until their number was reduced to nine. The feet of the dead were so frost-bitten that, on stripping them to give their clothes to the survivors, their toes came away with their stockings. Their compass was broken, but, guided by the sun by day and the stars by night, they reached in twenty-eight days the coast of Newfoundland.

The extreme cold which destroys men's lives in the ice-fields of the North preserves the bodies, of which the following is an awful example :—

In August, 1775, Captain Warren, the master of a Greenland whale ship, found himself becalmed amid icebergs. As far as the eye could reach, the ocean was blocked up with them in one quarter, and they were of a height that showed it had been so for a long period. Presently a gale arose, in which Captain Warren had the utmost difficulty in saving his ship ; but when the storm subsided one side of her was free from ice. On the

other, where the icebergs had lain so high, some had been separated by the wind, and 'in one place a canal of open sea wound its course among them as far as the eye could reach.' The sun was shining brightly, a light breeze blew from the north, and down this open water came—marvellous to see—a sailing ship !

Whence it came, or after what length of imprisonment, the narrator could not guess, but on it came, with dismantled sails and broken rigging, and apparently without a rudder, for presently it went aground upon the ice and stopped. Captain Warren's curiosity induced him to order out a boat and row to her, though she was still more than a mile away. Not a soul was on her deck, which was thick with snow ; no answering shout replied to theirs. They boarded her, and, removing the closed hatchway, descended into the cabin.

A man sat there reclining back in a chair with writing materials before him. He was dead, and 'a green damp mould covered his

cheeks and forehead, and veiled his eye-balls.' He had a pen in his hand, and in the log-book before him were these words, the last he had ever written :—

'*November* 11, 1762.—We have now been inclosed in ice seventeen days. The fire went out yesterday, and our master has been trying ever since to kindle it without success. His wife died this morning. There is no relief.'

In the next cabin was a woman lying in an attitude of deep interest and attention ; she was watching—or seemed to do so—a young man on the floor who was holding a piece of steel in one hand and a flint in the other. In the forecastle were several dead sailors, and a boy crouched at the bottom of the gangway stairs. So terrified were the visitors by this terrible spectacle, that they hurried into their boat, carrying only the log-book with them. On returning to England Captain Warren made inquiries, and found that the deserted ship had in truth been missing for thirteen years—frozen in its prison of ice.

*THE UNDISCOVERED ISLAND.*

THE voyage of the 'Antelope' (or the 'Antelope' packet, as the old narratives term her) is in some respects quite unique ; there is nothing in the annals of shipwreck like it. The ship was in a manner lost, yet her timber served to build another vessel and bring her crew home. She was cast away upon an island up to that time unknown, so that her voyage added something to human knowledge. Her people received such kindness from certain 'savages' as is rarely met with from civilised folks.

What is still more strange, the friendship thus begun was continued by the mother country, and the heir-apparent of the native king became its honoured guest. It is exactly a hundred years since the 'Antelope' was wrecked, but it is not fifty since the

memory of Prince Lee Boo was still green in England, and the narrative of his brief and blameless life formed a popular volume. Winthrop Mackworth Praed, with whose poems I trust my young friends will one day make themselves acquainted, speaks of the usual contents of an album in his day as being

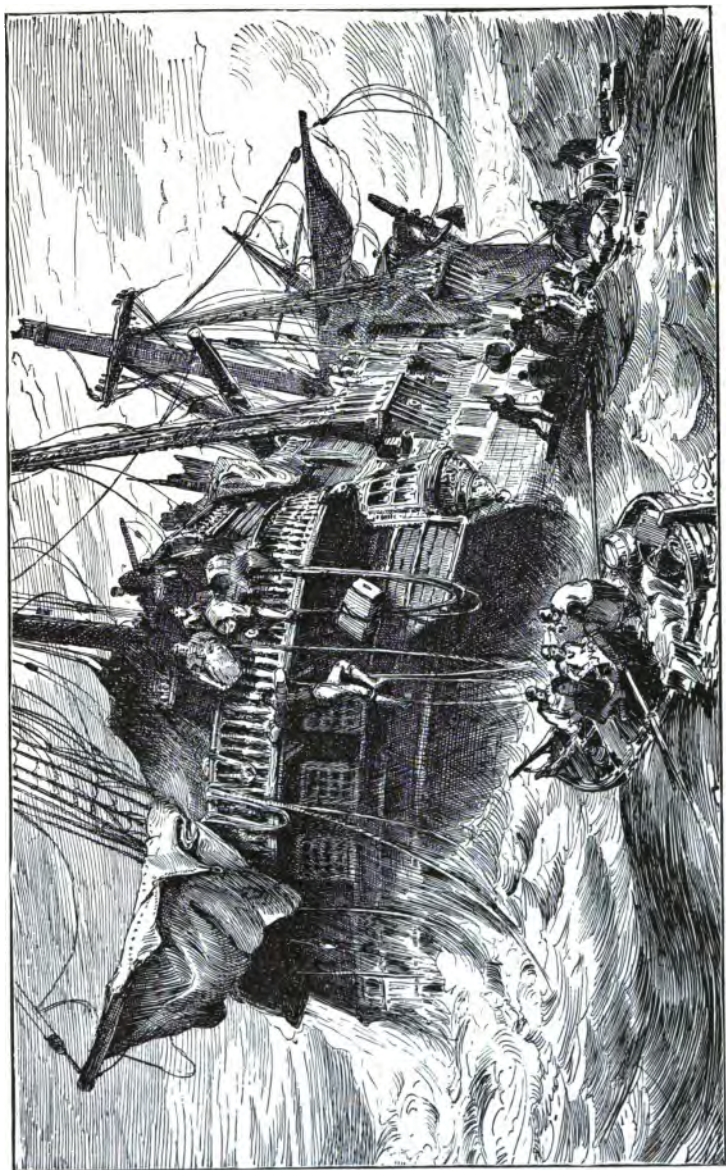
Autographs of Prince Lee Boo  
And recipes for elder water,

so that it is clear his dusky Royal Highness had at least learned to write his name.

The 'Antelope' was a ship of 300 tons, belonging to the East India Company's service. Her crew consisted of fifty persons (who when at sea and in danger are always called 'souls'), of whom sixteen were Chinese. She sailed from Macao on her homeward voyage in July, 1783. The time that was taken to cross seas in those days seems to us enormous; we find ships here in June and there in December, but by no means at home yet, and without any signs of impatience or tediousness in those on board.

Early in August, in a part of the ocean where, so far as was then known, there was no land, the ship struck in the night. The discipline was perfect. The people were only desirous to execute whatever the captain directed them to do. And this was the case (a rather exceptional one, I am sorry to say) throughout with the 'Antelope.' 'The gunpowder, small-arms, bread, and all provisions that would spoil by rot were instantly brought on deck and secured by tarpaulins.' The masts and lower yards were cut away promptly, yet without that haste which the poet tells us is 'half-sister to delay.' Though the wind was blowing a gale, the boats were hoisted out, filled with provisions, supplies of water, a compass, arms and ammunition, and kept under the lee of the ship, with precautions against their being staved.

Then the captain called the crew together and addressed them in words of encouragement. That they were about to be shipwrecked in an unfrequented and, as it turned out, unknown sea was certain ; but ship-



*'Though the wind was blowing a gale, the boats were hoisted out.'*





wreck, he reminded them, was the common lot of sailors, and the only things to save them in such a strait were courage and discipline, whilst disagreement was certain to be their ruin. As they were wet through and worn out with toil, 'a glass of wine and a biscuit were given to each person, and, after eating, a second glass,' but they were most earnestly admonished to abstain from spirituous liquors.

It was a dark night, but during one intense flash of lightning the mate and another had fancied they saw land ahead. Hence every one was advised to clothe himself, and prepare to quit the ship. The dawn of day showed a small island to the southward, three or four leagues distant, and, soon after, some other islands to the eastward. So a couple of boats were manned and despatched under the command of the chief mate, Mr. Berger. This was not like going ashore, be it remembered, at New York or Liverpool. The islands were unknown; whether they were uninhabited, or the haunts

of cannibals, could not be guessed ; but the mate had orders, in case he met with any natives, to be as polite as possible, and not to use his 'make-thunders' (as the savages call guns) till the last extremity.

The rest of the crew, instead of speculating on the future, busied themselves in 'getting the boom overboard, in order to construct a raft, since the ship was hourly expected to go to pieces.' After some time the boats returned with the news that the island was uninhabited, that there was a secure harbour, and plenty of fresh water.

The raft was then completed, and loaded with as many stores as it could safely carry with its passengers, and was towed by the boats. It shows the diligence with which these good fellows worked that the carpenter was so intent on saving all his tools and stores that he did not hear the warning of the boat-swain's whistle, and was left on board. But as soon as his absence was discovered, the jolly-boat went back for him.

The raft had to cross a reef, where the

running of the sea and the spray obscured the sight of the boats from the passengers, who had to lash themselves to the timbers of their frail craft. The screams of the Chinese, less inured to the perils of the sea, added terror to the scene. They all arrived in safety, but the storm continuing, they were harassed by the fear that the 'Antelope' would not hold together till morning, for at present they had got but little out of her. Moreover, the constant perspiration they had been in, the being perpetually wet with salt-water, and the friction of their clothes from excessive labour, had chafed them so that they could not sleep for pain. Even a small trouble, you see, will help to make a great one still more severe ; so when folks are in sorrow let us be very careful not to add anything, however light, to their burden.

In the morning, however, the ship was still visible, and it may be briefly said that, just as in the case of our friend Robinson Crusoe's ship, they took almost everything out

of her worth taking, down to her swivel-guns, and collected a larger store of provisions about them of every kind than any other shipwrecked crew of the same size could ever boast of. The hope, which they had secretly clung to, of the ship being floated and repaired so as to take them back to Macao, was nevertheless utterly extinguished. They found themselves suddenly cut off from the rest of the world, without remedy, and could see no end to their misfortune.

It must be understood that when a merchant-vessel is wrecked, authority ceases, and every man does what he deems right or pleasantest in his own eyes. But this crew was such a wise one that they of their own free-will elected their old captain to be their ruler, and volunteered to obey him. And he on his part, though very sensible of their generous behaviour, was resolved not to hold the sceptre in vain.

‘ Since you trust me,’ he said, ‘ you must believe what I say when I tell you that our chief danger lies in yonder spirit casks ’—for

he well knew what evils drink can work among despairing men. 'I must have every one of them staved in' (though one was kept for medicinal purposes). His orders were obeyed at once.

One day two canoes were seen coming round into the bay. The people all flew to arms, but were kept out of sight, while Captain Wilson and his interpreter, Tom Rose (who could speak Malay), walked quietly to the shore to meet them.

Rose addressed the occupants, and though he found himself understood by only one of the strangers, explained the position of affairs, which was translated to the rest. Then six natives out of the eight came ashore, the other two remaining with the canoes. 'They were of a deep copper-colour, perfectly naked, and their skins soft and glossy from the use of cocoa-nut oil. Their legs were tattooed from their ankles to the middle of their thighs, and so thickly as to appear much darker than the rest of their bodies. Their hair was of a fine black, long, and rolled up behind close to

the back of their heads in a neat and becoming manner.'

Captain Wilson introduced them to his officers, whose waistcoats and coat sleeves they at once began stroking, under the impression that they were their skins. The next thing they admired was the blue veins of their hands, which they took to be one of the neatest things in tattooing, and earnestly requested them to draw up their sleeves to see if their arms were really and truly of the same colour as their faces.

They were asked to breakfast, and though they declined to sit down, keeping themselves ready for a run to their canoes, they partook of it; they seemed especially to like sweet biscuits. The man who had understood what Rose said told Captain Wilson that he had himself been shipwrecked among these natives, who were a very courteous people. Their islands were called Pelew (they were not in our maps, of course, a hundred years ago, for this is the first that was ever heard of them), and their king was a good man.

One of his canoes had been out fishing, and brought word of the wreck to him, and his Majesty had despatched these folks to see all about it.

The fears of the natives having been quite put at rest and breakfast disposed of, the visitors asked the captain to 'send one of his men with them to the king as a specimen.' Captain Wilson requested his brother, Mr. Matthias Wilson, to undertake this errand, with instructions to make as favourable an impression as possible. Mr. Wilson took with him as presents some blue broadcloth, a canister of tea, a parcel of sugar-candy, and a jar of rusks, which was added at the special desire of one of the visitors, Raa Kook, who, being the king's brother, understood his Majesty's tastes.

Raa Kook stayed behind with his new friends in the tent which they had set up, and enjoyed himself immensely. He proved from first to last a most excellent fellow, very honourable and upright, but of an unbounded curiosity. Nothing escaped his

notice. He volunteered his personal assistance to everything that was going on, 'and even wished to aid the cook in blowing up the fire.' In his great desire to imitate the new comers, he even sat up at table as they did, instead of squatting.

In the mean time Mr. Matthias Wilson was having quite as exciting a time of it as Raa Kook, only in a passive instead of an active way. The king received him graciously, and gave him a mat to sit upon, which he found rather inconvenient, as he had never been a tailor. His Majesty took to the sugar-candy so very kindly that he left the visitor to other people. 'Taking off his hat by accident, the whole assemblage was struck with astonishment, upon which he unbuttoned his waistcoat and took off his shoes,' to their unbounded satisfaction. He had a supper of shell-fish and yams, and was shown to a sleeping-place; but as eight men presently arose and began to make huge fires on either side of him, he did not rest very comfortably, being fully persuaded in



his own mind that he had fallen amongst cannibals, and was about to be roasted. However, he met with no harm, and returned to his friends in safety.

Notwithstanding these proofs of the peaceable disposition of the natives, Captain Wilson never relaxed his precautions, the camp being nightly guarded by nine sentinels, and every one prepared for action should things turn out badly. Except, however, that some natives got on board the wreck, and, breaking into the doctor's stores, drank some medicine, the effect of which alarmed them exceedingly, our castaways had nothing to complain of in the conduct of their new allies.

The king himself presently paid a royal visit, his canoe advancing between four others, the men in which splashed the water with their paddles in a triumphal arch over his head, and blew conch-shells like mermen. The captain and he embraced and fraternised. His Majesty was no better clothed than the rest, but carried a hatchet

of iron over his shoulder, whereas those of his subjects were of shell. He came with several chiefs and three hundred men, and as each chief fixed his eye upon some one person, the latter thought that he was to be his watcher's prisoner, and perhaps to become his food ; 'but so far from this being the case, it was intended that each person should be the friend and guest of the chief who had singled him out.'

What the king had heard of from his brother, and was wild to witness, was the effect of fire-arms. When a musket was discharged the natives testified the most extraordinary surprise, but when a swivel was fired (a six-pounder) they thought it was the end of the world. Raa Kook, who was commander-in-chief of the forces, drew his Majesty's attention to a grindstone which he had learned to work, and delighted him with its rapid motion ; he also blew the bellows to make up the fire. His royal brother fell on his neck and wept as though he had now seen everything, and could die happy.

What in the end probably won the monarch's goodwill above everything was that now and again Captain Wilson lent a few men to him—with muskets—to help him in the wars in which he was constantly engaged with the neighbouring is'landers. Wherever the 'make-thunders' were heard, victory declared herself on that side, and the alliance between the castaways and their hosts grew very firm in consequence. Oroolong, as the castaways' island was called, became almost as familiar to the king as his own Pelew, and the most intimate friendship sprang up between the natives and the visitors. The captain, in his turn, visited Pelew, and was made royally welcome. They gave him pigeons, which were reserved for the members of the king's family, and he was introduced to the king's wives, who seemed to pass their lives in making sweet drinks and mats, and in rubbing themselves with some kind of ointment.

Under no circumstances, however, do I think the Englishmen would have met with

any harm. Even when they announced their intention of building a ship out of the timbers of the 'Antelope' and sailing home, the king, though he must bitterly have regretted the loss of his allies, made no objections, and his amazement at the size and progress of this vessel was extraordinary.

The 'Antelope,' though it could never float again, still stuck on the coral reef on which it had struck. Its nails and planks and upper sheathing were all laid under contribution for the new ship, which was constructed on a sort of dry-dock, made with infinite pains and skill. On November 3 they began to cut down trees for blocks and launching ways. All were in the highest spirits at the prospect of getting home and seeing their friends, who would probably have given them up for lost, save one of the seamen, named Planchard, who announced his intention of remaining with his new friends. As no arguments could persuade him to the contrary, the captain made a merit of leaving him behind them with his

'make-thunder' and plenty of ammunition. This man turned out badly. After his companions departed he left off clothing, sank into a savage, and was killed in a battle with his new sovereign's enemies.

When the vessel was painted, Raa Kook himself, who thought he had a taste for decoration, insisted upon ornamenting its stern. 'What the ornaments were intended for could not, however, be discovered.' When the launch was effected the captain gave a great entertainment to his allies. The king came as to a picnic, with nine of his wives, and a little daughter to whom he was devoted. They were feasted on fish, and rice mixed with molasses, which they relished, as they did all sweet things, immensely. Then the king informed the captain that he intended to make him a 'Rupeck' (chief of the highest rank), and invest him with the order of the (ring) Bone.

Raa Kook, taking the ornament, anointed the captain's hand with oil, and after great efforts, during which the most solemn silence

was preserved, squeezed it on. Then the king told him that it should be 'rubbed bright every day, be defended valiantly, and not suffered to be torn from his arm but with loss of life.'

Lastly, the king had a favour to ask which is quite without parallel in the history of a savage people. Touched with the kindness of the English, and deeply impressed with their wisdom and sagacity, he expressed his determination to send his second son, Lee Boo, to England, under the captain's protection, there to be educated and instructed. Raa Kook himself, it appeared, had wanted to go, but being the next heir to the throne (for succession in Pelew went from brother to brother, and not from father to son), his Majesty had refused his consent. A nephew of the king had also wished to accompany the strangers, but the king said his 'nephew was a bad man, who neglected his family, and that he would send no such specimen of his own people to give a bad impression of them.'

The English left the jolly-boat behind them, their swivels, and many other things, in acknowledgment of the hospitality which they had received. They hoisted the English pennant on one of the trees which had sheltered them so long, and to another tree affixed a plate of copper with this inscription : ‘ The Honourable East India Company’s ship the “ Antelope ” was lost on a reef north of this island on the night between the 9th and 10th of August. Henry Wilson, commander, built a vessel, and sailed from hence the 12th day of November, 1783.’ The king promised that these mementoes should remain undisturbed, and he kept his word.

*THE RAFT OF THE 'MEDUSA.'*

IN the course of these narratives it cannot have escaped my readers how often danger has been lessened and catastrophes avoided when there have been obedience and discipline, and on the other hand when these have been wanting, how in most cases all has been lost. The most terrible example of this latter kind is found in the wreck of the 'Medusa,' upon the whole, perhaps, the most disastrous event that has been recorded in nautical annals—one, too, in which selfishness and brutality played such prominent parts, that for years afterward the French navy, to which the ship belonged, was held in contempt and abhorrence.

The 'Medusa,' a frigate commanded by one Chaumareys, set sail from France in June, 1816, to take possession of certain colonies on



the coast of Africa, and within ten days an error of no less than thirty degrees was made in her reckoning. On the 1st of July she entered the tropics, and notwithstanding that the captain was in doubt of the position of the vessel, he permitted the crew to indulge in all the wild amusements usual on 'crossing the line,' without taking any precaution against danger. Though there was a suspicion that they were on the banks of Arguise, the lead was heaved without slackening, and while the officer in charge was stating his opinion that the ship was in a hundred fathoms of water, she struck in six fathoms, three times. The tide was then at flood ; at ebb there remained but two fathoms, and after some bungling manœuvres all hope of getting the ship off was abandoned.

The 'Medusa' possessed but six boats, not nearly sufficient for the crew and passengers, and from the moment that this fact was understood, all discipline and good feeling were thrown to the winds. A raft was indeed commenced, but hardly any one could be induced to work at it. The rest 'scrambled

out of the wreck without order or precaution, the first who reached the boats refusing to receive their less fortunate companions, though there was ample room for more.'

The captain himself stole out of a port-hole into his own boat, leaving his crew to shift for themselves. All that could be extracted from the runaways was a promise that they would tow the raft when it should have been launched.'

This raft, constructed without skill or design, was miserably ill-suited for its purpose. It was sixty-five feet long and twenty-five broad, but the only part that could be trusted to was the middle, on which there was room for only fifteen persons to lie down. 'Those who stood on the floor were in constant danger of slipping through the planks ; the sea flowed in on all sides. When the one hundred and fifty persons who were destined to be its burden were on board, they stood in a solid block without a possibility of moving, and up to their waists in water.' It was understood that the raft should carry the provisions, and,

being taken in tow by the six boats, the crews should apply at certain intervals for their rations. The whole affair, however, would appear to have been a blind, in order to quiet the poor wretches on the raft, and perhaps the consciences of the others, who were only looking to their own safety.

As they left the ship a M. Coneard, inquiring whether the charts, instruments, and stores were on board, was told by an officer that nothing was wanting. 'And who is to command us?' inquired Coneard. 'I am to command you,' said the officer, 'and will be with you in a minute,' with which words he slipped out of a port-hole, as his captain had done before him, into one of the boats.

The raft had been towed but three leagues when the line that united it to the captain's boat was broken (probably on purpose), which was taken as a signal for all the other boats to cut their cables. At the same time, with some instinct of cowardice and cruelty that is impossible to understand, the crews exclaimed, 'We abandon them,' which they at once pro-

ceeded to do, amid the yells and curses of those they had betrayed. When we add that the weather was quite calm, and that these boats were then but twelve leagues from the African coast, which, indeed, they reached that very night, it is difficult to find a parallel to such an act of baseness. '*Not one of the promised articles,*' says the narrative from which account this is taken, 'had been placed on board the raft.' There were a few casks of wine, but no provisions save some spoiled biscuit, and that only sufficient for a single meal. The one pocket compass they possessed had fallen between the planks into the sea.

As no refreshment had been issued since morning, some wine and biscuit were distributed, the last solid food which was to pass their lips for thirteen days ! The night was stormy, and when the dawn appeared twelve poor wretches were found crushed to death between the planks of the raft, and more were missing, 'but the exact number could not be ascertained, as the soldiers had taken the billets of the dead in order to obtain for themselves two or even three rations.'

It must be confessed, indeed, that vile as were the wretches who had forsaken them, they were not much viler than their victims. The physical agonies these now began to endure were accompanied by the most selfish and reckless crimes. The soldiers drank immoderately, and some under pretence of resting themselves actually tried to cut the ropes that bound the raft together. These wretches were thrown into the sea. Then these madmen quarrelled with one another. The raft was strewn with their dead bodies, and 'after innumerable instances of treachery and cruelty, from sixty to sixty-five perished during the second night.'

On the fourth day many of the survivors were reduced to feed upon the bodies of the dead, which, as usual, provoked another outbreak of madness. A more general attempt was made to destroy the raft, which, being opposed by the less reckless, ended in the slaughter of half the remaining crew. On the fifth morning but thirty men remained alive, and even these 'sick and wounded, with the

skin of their lower extremities corroded by salt water.' After a council of despair it was determined, as a little biscuit and wine still remained, to throw the weaker members of the company, since they consumed a part of the common store, into the sea. With these were thrown all the arms on board, with the exception of a single sabre.

On the ninth day 'a butterfly lighted on the sail, and though it was' (justly) 'held to be a messenger of good, *many a greedy eye was cast upon it.*' Everything that could be devoured, however little it resembled an article of food, such as some tooth-powder, was fought for, while the daily distribution of wine awakened such feelings of selfishness and ferocity as are impossible to describe. On the seventeenth day a brig was seen, which took off the survivors of this scene of despair and carnage—fifteen in number !

As the 'Medusa' had money on board of her, it had seemed worth while to the French authorities to send a ship to look for her ; but from untoward circumstances she did not



*The raft of the 'Medusa.'*





reach the wreck till fifty-two days after the catastrophe. Sixty men had been abandoned on board of her, by what the narrator calls with bitter irony 'their magnanimous countrymen.' Of these, three were found alive, desperate and ferocious. When their provisions had quite given out they had shrunk into separate corners of the wreck, and '*never met but to run at each other with drawn knives.*'

Such is the tale of the wreck of the 'Medusa'; many of the details of it I have shrunk from giving, but to have altogether omitted it would have been to leave these narratives of Peril and Privation incomplete indeed. With the exception of M. Coneard, who did what little lay in his power to stem the tide of mutiny and despair, no one on board the ill-fated vessel seems to have shown the least spark of duty or even of common humanity. It is a consolation to reflect that neither the flag of England nor that of the United States, though both have often witnessed similar calamities, has ever been stained with such disgrace.

*THE BURNING OF 'LE PRINCE.'*

A FRENCH East Indiaman, 'Le Prince,' sailed on February 19, 1752, from Port l'Orient. She had scarcely cleared the harbour when she was driven upon a sandbank, and was injured to such an extent that she was obliged to return to port to be refitted.

Starting for the second time, she reached the tropic seas only to take fire. Lieutenant De la Fond, the officer of the watch, caused some sails to be at once dipped in the sea and placed over the hatches, but such a cloud of smoke issued from between the crevices that none could endure it, and the flames gained ground notwithstanding all efforts to subdue them. In vain buckets were filled, pumps plied, and pipes introduced from them into the hold.

The yawl was hoisted out, and some men

jumped into her, but the ship, which had her sails set, soon outstripped it. The other boats could not be got out. Discipline, as is too often the case among French sailors, was at an end, and every one did what was right (which generally means wrong) in his own eyes. 'Terror pervaded everywhere; nothing but sighs and groans resounded through the vessel; the very animals on board, as if sensible of the impending danger, uttered the most dreadful cries. . . . Each was occupied in throwing overboard what promised even the slenderest chance of escape, yards, spars, and hencoops, and to them they clung.' The sea, terrible as it was, seemed to be less terrible than the flames.

'The shrouds, yards, and ropes alongside of the vessel were crowded with the crew, as if hesitating which form of destruction to choose. . . . A father was seen to snatch his son from the flames, and then throwing him into the sea, himself followed, where they perished in each other's embrace.' Think of this, dear children, safe on shore with your parents, and pity these unfortunates!

By order of the lieutenant the helm was shifted, which caused the ship to heel to larboard. This for a time confined the fire to the starboard only, where it raged from stem to stern. The captain, overwhelmed with grief for his female relatives who were among the passengers, could do nothing for the general good. He was engaged in attaching the women to hencoops, 'while some of the seamen, swimming with one hand, endeavoured to support them with the other.'

In the midst of this turmoil a new and undreamed-of danger suddenly showed itself. The guns, heated by the fire, began to discharge their contents among the poor wretches floating on the masts and yards. The flames by this time had gained such a mastery as to burst through the cabin windows.

M. de la Fond was compelled to do what he could for himself. He endeavoured to slip down a yard which dipped into the sea, but it was so crowded with human beings that he tumbled over them and fell into the water, where a drowning sailor seized hold of him and carried him twice under water. Though

a very resolute man, this incident shook his nerves, 'and in making a free passage through the dead bodies floating around him, he shoved them aside with one hand, impressed with the apprehension that each was alive and would seize him.'

The spritsail yard then appeared in view, but so covered with people that he hardly dared to ask for help. Some were quite naked, the rest only in their shirts, and all were expecting instant death; yet, remembering his late efforts for their preservation, they 'cheerfully made room for him.'

He presently changed this situation for a place on the mainmast, which had toppled overboard, crushing many in its fall. On this he found the good chaplain, who administered absolution (the last rite of the Catholic Church) to him—surely a striking picture of religious devotion!

Upon this mast were two young ladies (the only female survivors) and no less than eighty of the crew. The chaplain presently lost his hold, whereupon the lieutenant seized him.

'Let me go, De la Fond,' said he; 'I am



‘HE FOUND THE GOOD CHAPLAIN, WHO ADMINISTERED ABSOLUTION.’

already half drowned ; it’s only prolonging my sufferings.’

'No, my friend,' replied the lieutenant. 'When my strength is exhausted I must drop you, but not before. We will perish together.'

One of the young ladies fell off and was drowned.

Presently the yawl came in sight ; it could hold but very few people, but those in it insisted on saving the lieutenant, 'since he alone could guide them to land.' As they would not come near the mast lest the numbers should swamp the boat, he swam out to them and was taken on board. The pilot and the master did likewise.

A few minutes later the fire reached the magazine. There was a tremendous explosion. 'A thick cloud intercepted in an instant the sight of the sun, and amidst this terrific darkness nothing could be seen but flaming timbers high in air. Then they beheld the sea covered with pieces of wreck, mingled with bodies, "half choked, mangled, half consumed, but still retaining life enough to be sensible of the horrors that surrounded them."' '

The lieutenant's courage did not even then

desert him. He caused the yawl to approach this terrible scene, to see whether anything could be picked up to save them from a death even worse than that which had befallen their fellows. They found several barrels, but only full of powder, which had been thrown overboard during the conflagration. They did pick up, however, a cask of brandy, fifteen pounds of salt pork, some scarlet cloth and linen, a dozen pipe-staves, and some cordage. This was all. They had neither chart nor compass, and only knew that they were six hundred miles from land.

Every article they had was by the lieutenant's orders at once made use of. 'The lining of the boat was torn up for the sake of the planks and nails ; a seaman had luckily two needles, and the linen afforded whatever thread was necessary. The piece of scarlet cloth made a sail, an oar a mast, and a plank a rudder.'

Eight days and nights they sailed on, guided by the rising and setting of the sun and moon, and the position of the stars ; their naked bodies exposed to scorching heat by



day and to intense cold by night ; their food a small piece of pork once in twenty-four hours, until the fourth day, when they could eat it no longer on account of the inward heat and irritation it produced ; their only drink was a glass of brandy from time to time, which inflamed them without satisfying their thirst.

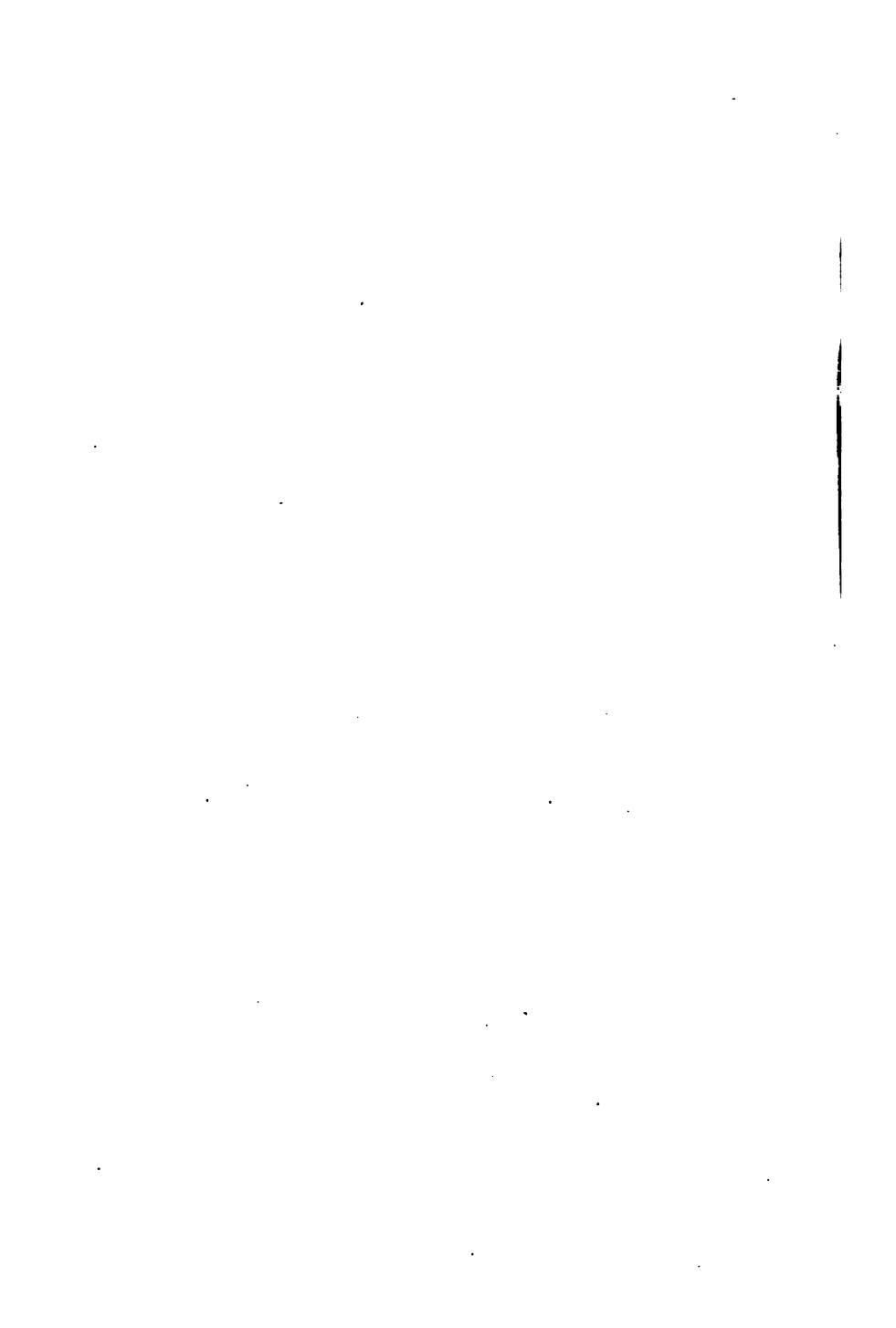
They had no water, nor till the sixth day did any rain fall ; this they caught in their mouths and hands, but dared not pray for more, for with the rain the wind, in which lay their only chance of safety, lulled. Abundance of flying-fish were seen, and if they could have devised any means of catching them they need not have suffered so much from hunger. But although nearly within arms'-length they were in reality as far off as if in another realm. The sight of them only increased the agony of the suffering creatures, and drove them almost frantic. The eighth night was passed by the brave De la Fond at the helm, where he remained ten hours, and on the ninth morning they saw land—the coast of Brazil.

*THE ROMANCE OF M. DE BELLEISLE.*

It will surprise some young people of the United States to learn that so late as the last century 'a great tract of American territory called Louisiana' was transferred by the French Government to the West India Company, who sent a thousand men, under the command of M. de Belleisle, to people it. They will be still more astonished to learn that St. Bernard's Bay, in the Gulf of Mexico, to which that gentleman's ship was carried by adverse winds, was at that time a region inhabited by cannibals. At this spot, in company with four brother officers, M. de Belleisle, having ventured too far on a shooting excursion, and being given up for lost, had the misfortune to be left behind. The little party suffered great extremities of hunger, and demanded their commander's dog, which, though he refused



*'The faithful dog laid an opossum at his feet.'*



to be a party to its destruction, he gave up to them. But as they were weakened by their privations, the animal broke away from them as they were about to kill him, and disappeared in the woods.

The four officers all died of hunger under M. de Belleisle's eyes, who dug holes in the sand for their bodies, though near to death himself. The extremities to which he was reduced were such that, 'overcoming the natural disgust which they created, he subsisted on the worms he found in rotten wood.' A few days after the death of his comrades his faithful dog suddenly re-appeared, and 'fawning upon his master, and with great demonstrations of joy,' laid an opossum at his feet. Perhaps he was merely performing the natural duties of a retriever, but it is no wonder that M. de Belleisle attributed to the animal a nobler motive; it seemed to him to say, 'Here is wherewithal to support life, master.'

Nevertheless, it was fated that he should lose the dog, though it could hardly be said that they parted company. As he slept one

night at the foot of a tree, a tiger came to the spot and seized the poor animal, and though he let go his hold, it was terribly wounded. Fearing lest it should go mad, M. de Belleisle compelled himself to kill the dog, and then—to such lengths can hard necessity drive human nature—he ate it.

After wandering about in solitude for days, he fell into the hands of the Attakapas, an Indian tribe whose name was derived from their practice of drying human flesh before devouring it. M. de Belleisle, however, was so miserably emaciated that the idea of drying *him* did not occur to them. ‘They took him for a spectre, till he pointed to his mouth and implored for food.’ They gave him human flesh and fish, to which latter dish he of course confined himself; and then, stripping him of his clothes, they divided them among themselves, and carried him to their village to fatten.

It is difficult to imagine a more unpleasant state of affairs than this. Nothing, it is said, used to alarm Lord Byron like the idea of

growing fat, but M. de Belleisle was much more alarmed than Lord Byron. 'He was consumed with terror at beholding the savages feast upon the fattest of their prisoners of war, and in constant expectation, on attaining the least plumpness, of sharing their fate, and having his brains beaten out with clubs.' One would have thought that the mere apprehension of such a fate would have kept him as thin as a lath. But he was reserved for a far other fate. An ancient Attakapa widow took a fancy to him, and adopted him as her son. From that moment he was set at liberty, and considered one of the nation, 'and soon learned the Indian manner of conversing in dumb-show and of using the bow and arrow.' Having been so fortunate as to slay a number of some hostile tribe, he was regarded as a warrior, which did not, however, secure him against practical jokes.

On a certain hunting expedition, when he had made, as he flattered himself, a very respectable meal on venison, an Indian said to him: 'How feeble is prejudice! Formerly

you couldn't touch human flesh, and now you have been unconsciously enjoying it amazingly.' Poor M. de Belleisle was there-upon exceedingly unwell.

Two years afterward, certain deputies arrived from a distant tribe, who, 'attentively gazing' on the unhappy Frenchman, observed that in the country they came from (New Mexico) there were white men like him. He had preserved his commission in a box, and having made some ink from soot, he contrived to write at the bottom of the document: 'I am the individual above mentioned; I was abandoned in St. Bernard's Bay. My companions died of hunger, and I am captive among the Attakapas.' He gave this in private to one of the deputies, informing him that it was 'speaking paper,' and that if he presented it to the chief of the French in his own country he would be well rewarded.

But the deputy was so foolish as to tell the secret, and the other Indians, thinking the paper was something magical and valuable, tried to snatch it from him. He slipped through



their fingers, however, by swimming across a river, holding the document, lest it should get wetted, like Cæsar, above his head. 'After a journey of four hundred and fifty miles he arrived in the country of the Natches.' The French commander there, M. de St. Denis, was an officer of distinction ; 'he had made the first journey overland, from Louisiana to Mexico, where he married the Spanish Governor's niece, and was greatly respected.' Upon receiving his countryman's letter, he was moved with pity for him, and at once despatched ten mounted Indians, with guns, to his assistance.

The Attakapas had never heard a gun fired, and when these visitors discharged their muskets, took it for portable thunder. Under these circumstances they permitted M. de Belleisle to leave them without the least resistance ; otherwise they were very unwilling to lose him, and the poor widow wept bitterly on his departure. Thus he escaped from a captivity which would otherwise certainly have lasted his days.

This brief romance of real life ends very prettily. The Spanish Governor, who had never been able to conquer the Attakapas, sent them presents for their kindness to their prisoner, with an especial gift to the widow ; moved by which unexpected generosity, they sent ambassadors in their turn to make alliance, and these were accompanied by the widow herself. 'Since that period,' our author gravely informs us, 'the inhabitants of Louisiana have left off eating human flesh,' as indeed my readers may have heard from other sources.

*SLAVERY.*

THERE are only too many records of English castaways among the Moors. My difficulty is which to choose from them, or rather which to reject ; for the details of many of them would be too shocking for perusal. The whole nation, from their emperor downwards, appears to have been utterly barbarous and without compassion. It seems to us amazing how the English nation could have endured the existence of such things, their countrymen enslaved and tortured, their ambassador defied—and it was the same with the other European nations—and all this within such a comparatively short distance from their shores, and not a hundred and fifty years ago !

In January 1746, the 'Inspector' privateer sprang a leak in the Mediterranean, and, to

avoid inevitable death, the crew ran her ashore in Tangier Bay. Ninety-six were drowned, and the eighty-seven who survived lived to envy their lot. They were at once seized by the Moors, and stripped ; and though there was a treaty between Great Britain and Morocco, 'Mohammedans do not keep faith with Christian dogs,' and the emperor declared them to be slaves 'until the British Government discharged an old (and disputed) debt, claimed for captives redeemed seventeen years before.' These poor fellows were lodged in the town gaol, 'of the loathsomeness of which,' says one of them, Thomas Troughton, 'no idea could be formed by comparison now with the cells of Newgate,' and for almost three whole days they received no kind of sustenance. When the governor of the town had their wretched state explained to him, he answered, 'If the unbelieving dogs are hungry, let them eat the stones.' Permission was at last obtained for them to beg about the town accompanied by a guard, but the 'inhabitants showed little acquaintance with charity.' Thus they slowly

starved for two months, when the emperor suddenly sent for them ; news so alarming that they made an attempt to escape, which was resented in the most savage manner.

‘Iron chains were at once locked round their necks, and they were linked together by twenties ;’ they were thrown in a dark dungeon and without food ; their miseries seemed intolerable, ‘only no one,’ says the narrator, ‘can form any idea of what he is able to endure till he is put to the test.’ So nearly to starvation were they reduced, that they actually thought of putting one of their number to death in order that his body should support the rest ; an extremity of which I know only three examples of people being reduced to on land, though in shipwreck it is much more common than is supposed. At last some sheep were given them, ‘two of which, our people having wanted food for four days, they instantly devoured raw.’

On June 2 they reached the emperor’s camp, where for some offence, not connected

with themselves, they had what to many would have been the satisfaction of seeing their late tyrant, the Governor of Tangiers, laid in irons, and starved as they had been starved. Instead of remembering how he had bidden them eat stones, however, many of these 'Christian dogs' gave him bread, though they had only twopence a day to live upon!

The captives were employed in pulling down certain buildings under the emperor's own eye; and such was his barbarous impatience that 'they were not allowed a moment's rest, nor even to stand upright to stretch themselves; neither were they supplied with a single drop of water, though the heat of the sun was so great that their backs were one blister.'

The only release, except death, was to embrace the Mohammedan faith, and in fact, before a month was over, twenty of these poor wretches did so. The barbarous emperor, however, was as merciless, when angry, to those of his own faith as he was at all times to the Christians. The Governor of Tangiers

and some four hundred of his friends, after being kept without food for many days, were brought before him ; one of the chief of them was unchained and set apart from the rest. 'Then with all possible serenity the emperor told his armour-bearer to bring his scimitar, and exclaiming "In the name of God," with one blow struck off his head.' Then he bade the executioner and his assistants follow his imperial example, and with his own eyes beheld three hundred and thirty heads struck off! The death of one of these victims had already happened, but his body had been dragged about by his living companions, no one having dared to remove it without the emperor's express commands. The heads were collected in hampers and fixed on the walls of the city. The Governor of Tangiers and his sons were reserved for the purpose of extracting money from them, and when this failed they were bow-strung—strangled—by two guards, who executed the cruel orders of their master 'not to hurry over it,' only too completely. The execution lasted two hours.

‘Such was the master,’ says this unhappy narrator, ‘we were destined to serve.’

The hope of the arrival of an ambassador from England alone sustained them, for the English consul proved of no sort of use. In the meantime they suffered the cruellest hardships. The master of the privateer, one Kibbs, fainted at his work. The emperor inquired why the overseers permitted such indolence ; but the poor man had escaped them : he was dead. An enormous pile of wood had to be removed by the captives within a certain time, but as this was found to be impracticable, a hundred of the emperor’s foot-guards were ordered to assist them. Two superannuated soldiers found themselves unable for the task, and were perceived desisting by the emperor, who ordered them to be brought into his presence. They exclaimed that they were old and ill ; that they had served his father Muley Ismael for eighteen years in the army ; and entreated of him some support for the remainder of their lives. The emperor replied that he felt it to be his duty to relieve them



from the evils of old age and poverty, and ordered them to be instantly shot through the head.

On November 12 the captives were greatly cheered by receiving a communication from the ambassador, pathetically lamenting their situation, expressing his hopes of procuring their release, and encouraging them not to become Mohammedans, which, as they had let him know, they were much urged to do. Notwithstanding this, however, they remained in slavery, on account of some difficulty about their ransom and the old claim already alluded to. In February 1747 they were still working at fortifications as hard as ever, and treated by their keepers with even worse barbarities than before. At last, though the French, Spanish, and Portuguese, who were then their fellow-captives, shrank from having anything to do with it, the Englishmen resolved to complain to the emperor. They understood of course that he was quite merciless, but his fury had now and then been known to wreak itself even on evil doers. Mr. Nelson, one of the midshipmen

of the 'Inspector,' therefore presented himself before the throne, and through one Mauss, a Dutchman, who had been fifteen years a captive, and was in some favour, made his complaint.

The keeper was summoned—bâton in hand—'an instrument at least four inches thick ;' four captives whom he had cruelly used the day before were sent for, and armed with similar weapons, which, he being extended on the ground, they were commanded to break over his body. During this performance, the emperor constantly exclaimed, ' Beat him on the head, beat him on the head ! ' and only when he thought him dead (though the poor wretch lived for an hour afterwards) exclaimed, ' Enough ! '

On October 3 the Englishmen were inexpressibly overjoyed by being sent for to Tetuan, by the influence of the ambassador (which seemed to promise their freedom), and were congratulated by their fellow sufferers of other nations, ' who, nevertheless, could not avoid shedding tears of regret for their own

hopeless condition ;' nothing but extreme want of money would ever persuade the emperor to release a Spaniard or a Portuguese. On parting, their black overseer remarked grimly, ' Now I have no more to do with you : and if you ever catch me in your country, I expect no better usage than you have had here.'

At Tetuan they received clothing, which was an agreeable change to them, poor souls ; but their troubles were not nearly over. Although the proper amount of their ransoms was paid, 8,000*l.* more were demanded which had been paid for captives to the late Bashaw of Tetuan, who instead of forwarding it to the emperor had appropriated it. The family of the Bashaws were of course responsible for it, but it was more convenient to get it out of the ' Christian dogs,' who had it not to give. Twenty-five indeed were released, but the remainder (now reduced to twenty-seven), having watched their departure by ship, with longing eyes, were thrown into the Metammor, ' a pit twenty feet deep, with springs of water

in it, and a little hole at the top down which the Moors cast dead dogs, cats, and stones.' Here they lay twenty-three days.

The whole action of the British Government at home is unintelligible. What should we now think if Englishmen were thus treated without a fleet being sent at once to their assistance? None of these Moors seem to have been punished, however, and the extra ransom appears to have been actually paid before these remaining captives were set free.

The order to get into the boats that were to carry them to the ship was so eagerly obeyed, that 'they ran into the water as deep as the waist, each thinking himself happiest that could get in first,' so glad were they to escape from the clutches of that Moorish emperor, who during his reign of twenty-six years was computed to have massacred 7,000 white men.

What sounds very curious to our ears nowadays, the King of England was 'pleased to order five pounds apiece to be paid to these

victims of Moorish cruelty,' while Mr. Rich, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, gave the profits of a night's performance to them, at which 'they all appeared on the stage in iron chains and collars, such as they had worn in captivity.'

*THE LAST EXTREMITY.*

THERE is one sad matter that in descriptions of Privation is apt to be left out by the survivors, but which, when it takes place, affects them more than all the rest—namely, the necessity that sometimes arises for the sacrifice of one or two individuals to furnish sustenance for the rest. By some persons, even in the sharpest pangs of starvation, this last shift is never resorted to. They are ready enough, since cruel Fate demands it, to take their chance by lot with the others as to who shall die that his fellows may live, but they themselves steadily decline to keep life in them by such means. It is to the credit of human nature that there have been many examples of this fortitude, for unless one has tried what starvation is, it is impossible to understand

the passionate voracity with which the most unaccustomed, and finally the most loathsome, things are devoured. While admiring, therefore, the courage that withstands so dreadful a temptation, we must not be uncharitable to the poor wretches who, tried beyond their powers, at last give way to it. The readiness with which, from greed, we metaphorically 'devour one another' is, indeed, much more hateful, because it is not compulsory, than the unnatural extremities to which hunger drives us.

As John Lery, in his terrible story of the famine on board the 'Le Jacques,' observes : 'None can know who has not experienced it what it is to *rage with hunger*.' The most horrible sensations accompany it ; 'not only were the bodies of our people,' he says, 'debilitated, but their dispositions became morose, irritable, and ferocious, till after a while they began to look at one another *with a malignant eye*'—which is the preface to the terrible proposal in question. The pangs of thirst are even more dreadful, but, what is very curious,

the young do not suffer from that so much as their elders.

On board the 'Pandora,' for example, a young midshipman sold his miserable allowance of water for two days for one allowance of bread : and the ship's boys were the first to find relief from their ravenous appetite in chewing their leathern jackets and shoes, or in sucking the horn plates of the ship's lanterns. Long before this, 'the sweepings of the bread-room, though full of maggots, had been carefully collected together, and made into dough as black and bitter as soot,' and all the parrots and monkeys which they had on board had been devoured. The last device this unhappy crew hit upon, while any strength was left in them, was to hunt on board their water-logged and almost motionless vessel for mice, 'for which many lay watching, like cats, all night. A single mouse was more prized than an ox on shore. The surgeon having been so successful as to catch two, was offered (of course in vain) a complete suit of new clothes for them ; and after



the master had cut off the feet of a large rat which were left (as offal) outside the cabin door, he returned to collect and broil them on the coals, declaring that they were more savoury than the best game.<sup>1</sup>

The last things Lery remembers eating on board 'Le Jacques' were the claws and beak of his favourite parrot; the bird had been sacrificed long ago, though with hesitation as well as regret, 'since two or three nuts would have kept it alive without water.'

In the 'Dolphin' sloop, where the crew were 'one hundred and sixteen days in a state of famine,' they lived for twenty days on a daily allowance of an inch and a half square of the leather lining of a pair of breeches, and on the grass growing on the deck, which the captain (one Bradshaw of New York) asserts to have been from four to five inches long.

<sup>1</sup> In spite of some very particular inquiries, I have never been able to discover whether the sight of eatable but unaccustomed objects causes, as we say, 'the mouth to water' with starving men. The spectacle of a cook's shop of course would do so, but would that of a butcher's shop? The sufferers forget and cannot tell me; the savans know nothing about it.

Who can wonder that in such agonies the very last extremity was resorted to, and that lots were at last drawn, 'the shortest to mark the victim, and the shortest but one the executioner' ? Sometimes, in such cases, even the rudest justice is dispensed with, and, by the law of the stronger, the boys on board are sacrificed ; and more than once, in the sad stories of shipwreck, one finds the captain beseeching, with desperate energy, for four-and-twenty hours' delay, which in some cases has saved them from their destined fate.

From the reticence which, as I have already said, is naturally observed respecting this matter, there is a general idea that cannibalism in shipwreck is very rare. It is, or rather was (for the chances of the sufferers being picked up are now, of course, far greater than they were formerly), by no means rare—though only on ship-board. Sufferers from starvation on land are much more loath to give way to this last temptation. My conviction is that this arises from two causes : first, that the keenness of the air at sea makes the

pangs of hunger more insupportable ; and secondly, that the influence of public opinion is weaker. With 'Water, water all around, and not a drop to drink,' men seem to themselves to be alone in the world ; to have no other fellow-creatures save those who are undergoing the same calamity, and to be therefore less responsible for their actions. On land, though no other human beings are visible, they may be so, any moment : on the mountain-top, or from out of the wood, there may appear some fellow-creature with assistance, and also with reproach : 'Why could you not wait an hour longer before committing this terrible crime ?' if, indeed, that can be called a crime which to some natures at least is compulsory.

There is a terrible story, admirably told (I think by Henry Kingsley), of the escape of three convicts in Australia, two of whom were driven to eat their fellow in the bush ; but such shocking extremities are almost never resorted to save at sea. Among the immense number of narratives of privation which it has

fallen to my lot to read for this present purpose, I find only one case in which this most terrible occurrence happened on land. It took place after the wreck of the 'Nottingham Galley.'

This vessel, of ten guns and fourteen men, commanded by Captain John Dean, in sailing from England to Boston in the winter of 1710, was cast away on a rock called Boon Island, off Massachusetts Bay. When she struck, she laboured so violently and the waves ran so high that there was no standing on deck, while the weather was so thick that the rock was invisible. 'Upon this,' says the captain, 'I immediately called all hands down to the cabin, where we continued a few minutes, earnestly supplicating the mercy of Providence.' One of the men presently went out on the bowsprit, and reported 'something black' ahead, which he volunteered to investigate if accompanied by some other swimmer. Three men thus ventured, only to be swallowed up by the darkness; but as by this time the ship had almost broken up—'her

decks opening, and her back breaking, so that the stern was nearly under water'—there was no choice but to take the same course. 'I therefore stripped off most of my clothes, and moving gradually forward [on the bowsprit] between every sea, at last quitted it, and cast myself forward with all my strength.' Conceive what 'a leap in the dark,' in every sense, this must have been! The rock being very slippery, he could get no hold of it when he reached it, but, miserably lacerated, was thrown on and off it with every wash of the sea; 'the rest of the crew were exposed to the same peril, but still, through the mercy of Heaven, we all escaped with our lives.' On the rock they found the three men who had preceded them, and 'having all met together, we returned humble thanks for our deliverance.' The good or evil that happens to us is comparative, otherwise we might well say that these poor souls were thankful for small mercies. The rock, which was but one hundred yards long and fifty broad, afforded no shelter on its leeward side; it was so craggy that they

could not walk to keep themselves warm; while the weather was excessively cold, with rain and snow. With daylight came little cheer, since it only disclosed the miseries of their position. From the wreck there were cast ashore some planks and sails, 'but no provisions save some small fragments of cheese, which we picked up among the rock-weed.' They had a steel and flint, and also 'a drill with a very swift motion,' but having nothing in their possession which had not been long soaked in water, their utmost endeavours to procure a light were unsuccessful, and after eight days of failure the attempt was abandoned. 'All night we crowded upon one another under canvas, so as to preserve our mutual heat.'

The only hope of the castaways, unless they should be discovered by some passing sail, was to build a boat from the material of the wreck; but in the meantime they could not live on hope. The cook died, exclaiming, 'I am starved to death,' and his body was placed 'in a convenient place' for the sea to

carry it away. 'No one proposed to eat the body, though they afterwards acknowledged that they had thought of it; as, indeed,' confesses the captain, 'I had myself.'

The frost now became so intense as to deprive the hands and feet of most of the men of all sensation, and to render them so discoloured as to suggest mortification. They pulled off their boots (and the nails of their toes with them), and wrapped their feet in vain in oakum and canvas. They had built a tent out of the ship's sails, within which there was just room for all to lie down 'each on our side, so that none could turn unless the whole turned, which was done about every two hours, on notice given.' The building of the boat also proceeded, but very slowly; they had few tools, the carpenter was very ill, and 'the weather of such extreme rigour (it was December) that we could stay out of the shelter of the tent only four hours a day.'

The piety of these poor folks was remarkable (which renders their subsequent proceedings only explicable upon the ground of abso-

lute necessity), and the captain gives thanks to Providence for the casting ashore of a carpenter's awl wherewith the boat is finished—only to be staved to pieces the instant it is launched. In the boat were both awl and hammer, so that the building even of a raft was rendered almost impossible: still, 'we had reason to admire the goodness of God in making our disappointment the means of our safety, since the wind blew so hard that day that if we had been in that poor imitation of a boat we should certainly all have perished.' They were almost perishing now. Their extremities were frozen and mortified, and they had wounds, with nothing but one linen rag wherewith to dress them. There was no fire; their cheese was quite exhausted; and they 'had nothing to support our feeble bodies save rock-weed and a few mussels, scarce and difficult to be got, and at most two or three a day to each man.' Moreover, they had reason to apprehend that the approaching spring tides, with the high wind, would overflow the rock whereon they had established



their miserable abode. 'The pinching of cold and hunger, the extremity of pain and weakness, to many the racks of conscience, and to all the foresight of a certain but lingering death, destitute of the remotest chances of escape ! How heightened, how exaggerated, was such misery !' The captain, however, still clung to hope : 'Providence,' he touchingly says, 'a little to alleviate our distress and fortify our faith, guided my mate to strike down a sea-gull, which he joyfully brought me, and which I distributed in equal portions to every one. Though raw, and such a mouthful we received it thankfully.'

The miserable chance of constructing a sea-worthy raft was still left them, and was earnestly urged by a certain stout (or once stout) Swede, who, notwithstanding he had lost the use of both feet, was very active in putting it together. They accomplished their task with infinite labour, and the raft was launched, but at once overset, with the intrepid Swede, who, however, swam ashore. He again embarked upon it, with another sailor

who volunteered to accompany him, asserting that they would rather be drowned in the sea than endure such lingering torments. The poor fellows had their wish, for they were never heard of more.

What added to the miseries of the survivors was misplaced hope. They had arranged that their late companions should light a fire on the mainland in case they reached it, and they observed for two days a smoke issuing from a certain wood, which they took for a good sign.

The poor captain now found that his stomach rejected mussels, and his food was therefore restricted to rock-weed ; he was the strongest of the castaways, and we can therefore picture what must have been the condition of the rest, 'especially of a young brother I had with me, and another young gentleman, neither of whom had ever been at sea, or before endured any severities.' Fresh water they got from the rain and melted snow, and it was administered to the sick in the tent with a powder-horn. Part of a green hide, fastened

to a piece of the mainyard, being thrown up by the sea, was minced small, and swallowed voraciously.

Then the carpenter dies. The captain orders the men to throw the body into the sea ; they plead their inability through weakness, and he himself is not strong enough for the task. Breaking down in the attempt, 'and being ready to faint, I crept back into the tent, when, as the highest aggravation of distress, my men requested me to give them the body of their lifeless comrade to support their own existence.' The struggle in the captain's breast is most pitiable and pathetic. 'This was of all I had hitherto experienced the most grievous and shocking to me, to see myself and my companions, who had three weeks before been laden with provisions, now reduced to such a deplorable situation that two of us were absolutely starved to death, and that the rest, though still surviving, were, at the last extremity, to desire to eat the dead. After mature reflection and consultation on the lawfulness and sinfulness of the act on one

hand, and absolute necessity on the other, judgment, conscience, and other considerations were obliged to submit to the more prevailing arguments of our craving appetite.'

What was very curious, though the captain thus gave way to the general desire, and even upon his own account, yet when the moment came for indulging in this dreadful repast he could not bring himself to partake of it. Perhaps it was because to him, at the urgent entreaties of his men, had fallen the grievous task of preparing the hideous meal ; but, at all events, he never touched it. The others, though some held out for a day or two, 'ate abundantly and with the utmost greediness ;' so much so that he had to carry the dreadful thing some distance from the tent, out of which they could not stir. This terrible experience seems to have been physically little harmful to them, while it undoubtedly supported life, but morally it had the same effect which has almost always been observed of it in similar cases. 'The affectionate, peaceable temper which my men had hitherto

displayed, was altogether lost. Their eyes became wild and staring, their countenances fierce and barbarous, and instead of obeying my commands as they had readily and unreservedly done before, I found that all I could say was vain and fruitless.' The narrator appears to have had little doubt that, had their sufferings been prolonged, or, in other words, a second necessity arisen for the same loathsome food, there would have been murder done, since there was not enough sense of right left for the casting of lots.

Early in January the fragments of their raft, having gone ashore on the mainland, attracted attention, and boats were sent out for their deliverance. It was some time, however, by reason of the high seas, before succour could reach them, and longer still ere they could be transferred in their miserable and crippled state to ship-board. One of their visitors, ere this was done, perceiving the remains of their poor comrade exposed on the summit of the rock, expressed his satisfaction that, notwithstanding their deplorable condi-

tion, they were not utterly destitute of food. 'I acquiesced in the remark,' says Captain John Dean, 'but I kept the truth to myself.' Even when they were rescued he seems not to have revealed the matter, but finding himself in England a few months afterwards—some of his crew 'having sailed one way and some another'—thought it no harm to publish his narration. Captain Dean was the only one of the castaways who escaped without losing finger or toe from frost-bite: he lived for nearly fifty years afterwards, and died British consul at Ostend.

THE END.

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